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All that Glitters: A Memorial to Ottawa's Capitol Theatre and its Predecessors

by Hilary Russell

Canadian Historic Sites
No. 13

Erratum.
Due to an error, the illustrations appearing as Fig. 30 (p. 103) and Fig. 87 (p. 108) were transposed. The illustration appearing as Fig. 30 is in fact Fig. 87, and vice versa.

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Abstract
This paper is one result of the 1970 destruction of Ottawa's Capitol theatre, a movie palace built in 1920. Movie palaces were those gigantic, extravagantly embellished theatres built between about 1914 and 1932 in which vaudeville and motion picture entertainment was presented. One movie palace, the Capitol in Ottawa, is examined in terms of its construction, decoration, equipment and ownership. The investigation includes a general discussion of the movie palace phenomenon and the major developments in the evolution of motion picture exhibition that contributed to the building of movie palaces. Certain American prototypes are considered, as many Canadian palaces were built by American-controlled theatre circuits, designed by American architects, and exhibited American movies.

Submitted for publication 1974
by Hilary Russell,
National Historic Parks and Sites Branch
Readers who wish to receive a copy of a chronology of events and performances associated with the 50-year existence of Ottawa's Capitol Theatre may write to the author.

Sommaire
Lors de la fermeture du cinéma Capitol d'Ottawa en 1970, on confia à l'auteur, historienne à Parcs Canada (ministère des Affaires indiennes et du Nord), la tâche de rassembler des documents destinés à compléter le dossier photographique que la Division des recherches avait établi à l'égard de ce cinéma.

Dans la présente étude, le cinéma Capitol est considéré du point de vue de l'évolution architecturale des grands cinémas de luxe. On y trouve des descriptions et des photographies des premiers cinémas qui, souvent, n'étaient que des closes constructions de fortune exécutées à peu de frais. Surtout pour augmenter leurs profits, les exploitants de ces premières salles obscures commencèrent à les améliorer, à les "habiller." Cette façon de faire aboutit à la construction, entre 1913 et 1932, de ces grands cinémas de luxe qu'on appelle aussi "palaces" du cinéma dans la plupart des grandes villes d'Amérique du Nord. Bâtiments empreints de lourdeur et d'une somptuosité voyante, presque irréels, ils offraient aux amateurs de films une splendeur dépassant l'imagination.

L'architecte Thomas W. Lamb de New York fit œuvre de pionnier en ce qui concerne ces grands cinémas. Il conçut des centaines de ces salles pour les exploitants de chaînes de cinéma, y compris le Capitol d'Ottawa et une quinzaine d'autres au Canada. Le style de ces cinémas canadiens illustre la "période Adam" de Lamb, celle au cours de laquelle il s'attacha à reproduire et à modifier les élégants motifs décoratifs linéaires de Robert Adam, architecte écossais du XVIIIe siècle.

On demanda à Lamb et aux autres architectes de ces palaces du cinéma de créer des bâtiments immenses qui non seulement seraient décorés de façon impressionnante, mais nous donneraient une impression de qualité qui n'existait pas vraiment en réalité. En fait, il fallait construire ces édifices dans les plus courts délais possibles sans pour autant enlever quoi que ce soit à leur sécurité, à leur confort, à leurs qualités acoustiques et optiques. On exécuta des bâtiments à charpente d'acier avec des corbeilles en porte-à-faux, des dômes faits de lattes de métal et de plâtre suspendus à des supports d'acier, et des colonnes de bois et de plâtre peintes de façon à donner l'illusion du marbre.

Les autres éléments essentiels des grands cinémas de luxe comprenaient des installations d'éclairage qui émerveillaient l'auditoire par leur gamme de couleurs et leurs effets spéciaux, de fantastiques rideaux et décors de scène, une fosse d'orchestre et un orgue de cinéma. En fait, les films muets n'étaient pas projetés dans des salles silencieuses et, dans les cinémas de luxe, ils ne constituaient pas tout le programme. L'orchestre et l'organiste fournissaient une musique d'am-

biance et assuraient les effets sonores ; l'orchestre accompagnait les artistes lors de spectacles, et, tout comme l'organiste de théâtre, il présentait des programmes entièrement musicaux. L'invention du cinéma parlant amena la disparition de ces éléments propres à ces grandes salles et modifia profondément tous les secteurs de cette industrie. La fin de la construction des grands cinémas se produisit peu après, précipitée par la crise économique des années 1930.

Aujourd'hui, c'est le pic du démolisseur qui résonne le plus souvent dans ces salles. Elles sont situées sur des terrains très chers, sont fortement taxées et presque toujours à moitié vides. Quelques grands cinémas canadiens ont été métamorphosés au point de n'être plus reconnaissables et transformés en un certain nombre de petites salles, mais la plupart ont été démolis. Il est possible que d'ici quelques années, il ne reste plus de bâtiments représentatifs de ce type d'architecture au Canada.

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The task of researching Ottawa's Capitol theatre was greatly complicated by the destruction of most of the files kept in the theatre. Material has been gleaned from a variety of sources and a large number of helpful people.

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Introduction

On 1 May 1970, six months away from its fiftieth anniversary, the Ottawa Capitol theatre went dark after a benefit performance of Mary Pickford's "Pollyanna." In contrast to the civic mourning that surrounded its demise, it opened with great fanfare as Loew's Theatre in November, 1920. Its name and ownership were changed several times becoming B.F. Keith's Theatre in 1924, R.K.O. Keith's in 1929, the R.K.O. Capitol in 1931, and, in the mid-thirties, simply the Capitol.

The Capitol was an outstanding Canadian movie palace which had been designed by Thomas W. Lamb of New York, one of the most successful and influential movie palace architects. The Capitol had the largest seating capacity of any theatre built for motion pictures in Ottawa, and was the only one in the city to deserve the appellation of "movie palace." Like many palaces, it became a centre of the city's social and cultural life. As well as housing vaudeville and motion pictures, it was often rented for performances by touring companies and for other special events because for many years it was the only big theatre in Ottawa with a stage. In 1969, after the National Arts Centre was opened, however, the Capitol's large capacity became an instrument of its destruction.

The building of gigantic movie palaces was predicated on frequent changes of programme and capacity audiences. When they were built their drawing power far exceeded that of other movie theatres, as they offered stage shows, orchestral and theatre organ entertainment and the most recent motion pictures in exciting, expensive and up-to-date surroundings at competitive prices. Now the stage shows, orchestras and theatre organs are gone, and many theatre patrons live in the suburbs. If there is nothing on television, they can see new movies in small suburban theatres or in small cinemas in downtown shopping complexes which offer parking facilities. The movie palaces no longer attract enough regular patronage to warrant the cost of maintaining them and paying the spiralling taxes on their expensive sites.

With the exception of newspaper and motion picture trade journal articles and promotional material, not much was written about them in their heyday, although at the time movie palaces probably enjoyed more patronage than any other single type of public building. Their demolition has stimulated various books and articles, the formation of the Theatre Historical Society, their inclusion in the United States federal government's Historic American Buildings Survey, and this study of the Capitol theatre and its predecessors.

In the Beginning

To understand the Capitol and theatres like it, the movie palace phenomenon must first be examined in its historical perspective. The evolution of the movie house is a romantic story in the great American "rags to riches" tradition. Until 1902 there was no such thing as a movie theatre in a permanent location, though motion pictures as a commercial medium were then eight years old. During these years they were generally exhibited in penny arcades and fairground tents, and also were crowded into vaudeville theatre programmes. After 1902 they found exclusive and more or less permanent homes in small, stuffy converted stores with rudimentary furnishings, characterized by many as "firetraps and pestholes [which upset] the social balance and public morals."[1] A little over a decade after the appearance of the primitive store theatre, movies had become the feature attraction in colossal, sumptuous edifices too splendid to be called theatres.

Motion pictures were initially displayed in a viewing apparatus about the size of a filing cabinet. This device, often credited to Thomas A. Edison and called a "Kinetoscope," was essentially a coin-operated peepbox in which one viewer could watch for a minute or less through a slightly magnifying lens an illuminated cylinder of about 50 feet of celluloid film revolving on spools. These machines were first

1 The forerunner of the movie house, a Kinetoscope parlour, around 1897-98, 946 Market Street, San Francisco. (*National Film Board; photo credited to Peter Bacigalupi.*)

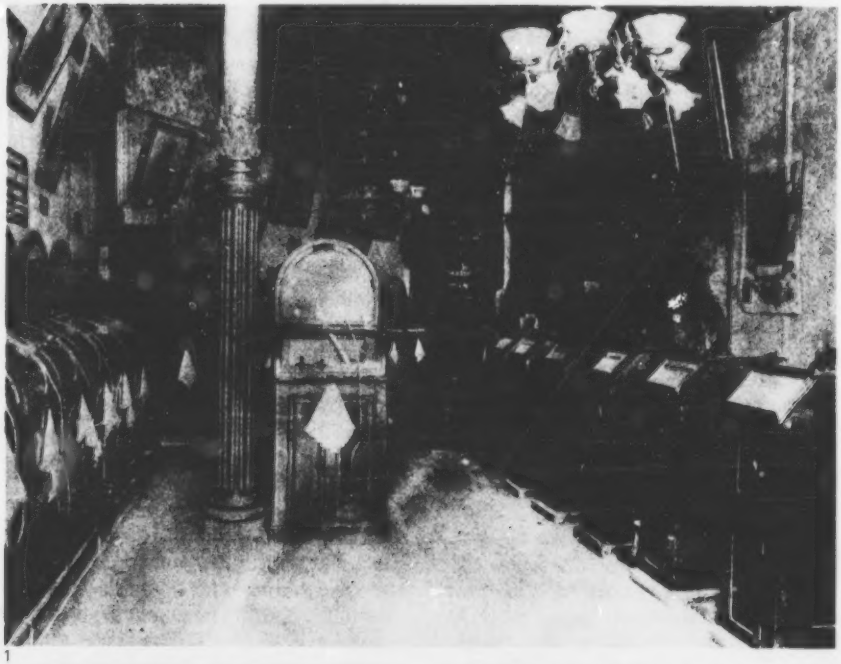
2 The first public exhibitors of Edison's Kinetoscope, Ottawa's Holland Brothers, Andrew M. (*left*) and George. (*Canadian Film Institute.*)

commercially exhibited in North America on 14 April 1894 at 1155 Broadway, New York, by Andrew and George C. Holland of Ottawa. Soon afterward, Kinetoscopes appeared in "Edison parlours" (small stores which also offered Edison phonographs), in curio shops and as fairground novelties (Figs. 1-3).[2]

On 23 April 1896 motion pictures were screened to a paying audience in a vaudeville theatre, Koster and Bial's Music Hall, Herald Square, New York. "Thomas Edison's Latest Marvel, The Vitascope" shared the billing with six vaudeville acts (Fig. 4). The Vitascope was a screen projector developed by Thomas Armat, though acquired and sponsored by Edison, and was based on the principles of the Kinetoscope. Motion pictures became "life sized," and were revealed to the Koster and Bial audience on a "gold framed screen," but the Vitascope movies, though of increased footage, remained very similar in content to those seen through a Kinetoscope peephole.[3]

After their commercial screen debut, motion pictures continued to be shown in vaudeville theatres as one of many attractions on the bill. Little expenditure was required to introduce moving pictures to a vaudeville programme.

A simple screen was erected, often of plain muslin on a wooden or iron frame, and an area sealed off for projection equipment. When the stage was in use...the screen was lifted into the fly tower or carefully rolled and stored at the back behind the flats.[4]



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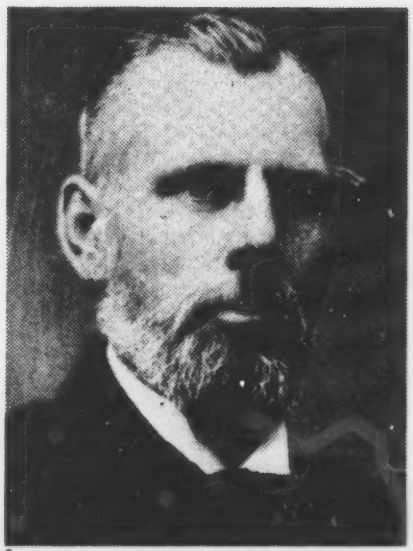

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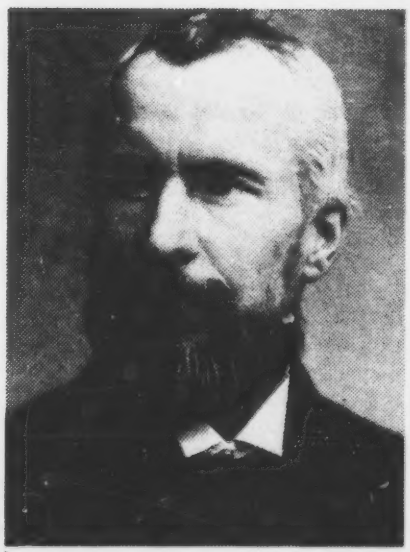

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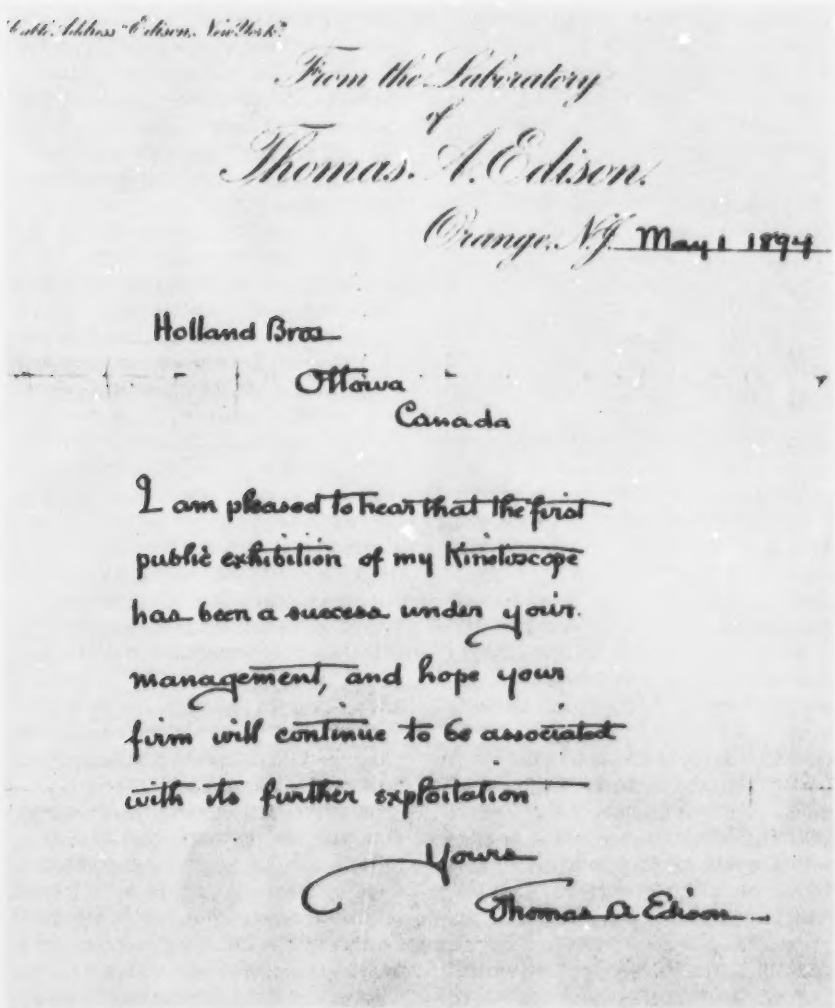
3 Edison's letter to the Holland Brothers acknowledging their pioneering achievement. The exhibition referred to took place in New York City on 14 April 1894. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



Cable Address "Edison, New York"

From the Laboratory
of
Thomas A. Edison.

Orange, N.J. May 1 1894

Holland Bros
Ottawa
Canada

I am pleased to hear that the first public exhibition of my Kinetoscope has been a success under your management, and hope your firm will continue to be associated with its further exploitation

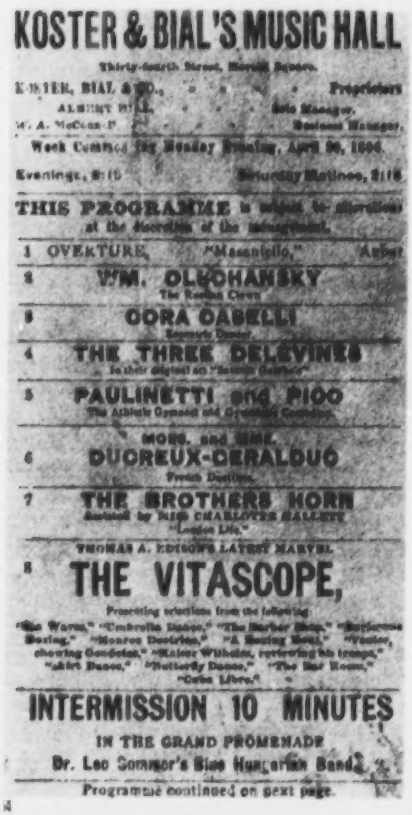
Yours
Thomas A Edison

3

Motion pictures were associated with vaudeville for about 30 years in the United States and Canada. Initially, the novelty of seeing life-sized moving pictures was popular with vaudeville patrons. But early moving pictures were short (100 to 1,000 feet in length), often flickering and hard on the eyes (mostly because of imperfect projection), and usually were devoid of narrative interest. Such subjects as a moving train, sea waves, or various vaudeville acts were filmed. By the turn of the century, moving pictures had lost their novelty value, and were offered in vaudeville houses merely as "chasers" to indicate that a new show was approaching and the house should be cleared.[5]

By about 1914, with the introduction of feature-length movies, the star system and a permanent industry in Hollywood, motion pictures had come a long way from being a poor relation as a commercial medium and had eclipsed their former master, vaudeville, in content, scope and commercial appeal. Throughout the 1920s theatres continued to be built with stage facilities as vaudeville was still popular, though seldom the feature attraction, and theatres with a straight vaudeville policy had become virtually a thing of the past. Furthermore, stage

4 Koster and Bial's programme, April 1896. As in Kinetoscope days, little bits of scenery or action are featured. (*Ben Hall Collection, Theatre Historical Society.*)



KOSTER & BIAL'S MUSIC HALL

Thirty-fourth Street, Herald Square.

KOSTER, BIAL & CO., Proprietors

ALBERT BIAL, Sole Manager.

W. A. McCONKEY, Business Manager.

Week Commencing Monday Evening, April 20, 1896.

Evenings, 8:15 Saturday Matinee, 2:15

THIS PROGRAMME is subject to alterations at the discretion of the management.

1 OVERTURE, "Masaniello," Auber

2 WM. OLSCHANSKY
The Russian Clown

3 CORA CABELLI
Serpentine Dancer

4 THE THREE DELEVINES
In their digital act "Russian Gymnasts"

5 PAULINETTI and PIOO
The Athletic Gymnast and Grotesque Comedian

6 MONS. and MME.
DUCREUX-GERALDUC
French Duettists.

7 THE BROTHERS HORN
Assisted by MISS CHARLOTTE HALLETT
"London Life."

8 THOMAS A. EDISON'S LATEST MARVEL.
THE VITASCOPE,
Presenting selections from the following:
"The Wave," "Umbrella Dance," "The Barber Shop," "Barbarous Boxing," "Monroe Doctrine," "A Bowing Bout," "Venice, showing Gondolas," "Kaiser Wilhelm, reviewing his troops," "Skirt Dance," "Butterfly Dance," "The Bar Room," "Cuba Libre."

INTERMISSION 10 MINUTES

IN THE GRAND PROMENADE
Dr. Leo Sommer's Blue Hungarian Band.

Programme continued on next page.

performances tended to endow a theatre that showed movies with a certain respectability.[6] The humble and even disreputable beginnings of motion picture exhibition had not been forgotten.

Between 1896 and 1902, besides being shown in vaudeville theatres, moving pictures were exhibited by travelling showmen (mostly in the summer in Canada) in community halls, empty stores rented for a week or two, on vacant lots covered with tarpaulin, and at amusement parks, circuses and fairs.

Although in accounts of Canadian film history, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal vie for the distinction of being the first Canadian city in which travelling showmen projected moving pictures, Ottawa may have the edge in the contest.[7] John C. Green, a magician by trade, early and frequently insisted in *Moving Picture World* and in the *Canadian Moving Picture Digest* that his exhibition on 15 June 1896 in West End Park, Ottawa, was the earliest in Canada. His date appears to be five weeks too early; contemporary newspaper accounts indicate that an exhibition of the Edison Vitascope at an open-air pavilion in West End Park and described as "the first...in Canada" took place on 21 July 1896.[8] This description is entirely plausible, as Ottawa's Holland brothers, who had introduced the Kinetoscope in the United States, had also secured "the sole right for exhibiting the Vitascope in Canada." The Hollands had made arrangements for the exhibition with O'Hearn and Soper's Electric Railway Company, and this company had engaged a magician (whose name was variously spelled Belzac, Belsac, and Belsaz in Ottawa newspapers) as an added attraction. (Green no doubt was "Belzac," and used a more exotic name than his own.) In his reminiscences, he recalled that he had contributed a 30-minute magic show and had described four Edison 50-foot films which were strung together in a belt and repeated as long as the projector was in operation. According to an *Ottawa Daily Free Press* reporter, the projected scenes included "a laughable representation of the widow's kiss," a whirlpool, the waves at Coney Island and a view of Broadway.

The closest thing to specially designed accommodation for the movies in Canada up to 1902 seems to have been a black tent which John A. Schuberg (alias Johnny Nash), a travelling showman in the western provinces, averred that he had devised about 1900. Schuberg's tent measured 20 feet by 60 feet and seated about 200 people. It was made of black canvas with an inner tent of black canton flannel to keep out the sunlight when it was windy. The "sidewall" could be raised every 20 minutes at the end of each show to cool off the patrons. The exterior was decorated with a marquee-like banner on poles, together with fairly lurid paintings or posters advertising the movie inside (Fig. 5).[9] Schuberg conceded, "I may not have been the first to think up the black tent, but I had not heard of any others."[10] Such modesty was uncharacteristic of early exhibitors. It was appropriate in Schuberg's case, as black tops had become fairly popular by that date with travelling exhibitors in the United States. In a 1916 article in *Moving Picture World*, William H. Swanson related that he had opened "the very first black top tent that was ever put up" in Booneville, Indiana, in July, 1897. His tent was of dyed black

5 John A. Schuberg's tent theatre at a 1900 street fair. This was the earliest type of structure especially designed for moving picture exhibition. (*Canadian Film Digest; photo courtesy of National Film Board.*)

canvas and was lined with black cotton cloth. His exhibition was interrupted when a rain storm washed all the dye out of the canvas, but a tentmaker subsequently produced for him a permanently black tent. Swanson later contrived a red canvas tent lined with black cloth with "properly protected ventilators in the 'top'" – he had noticed that a great number of his black-top patrons were regularly overcome by the summer afternoon heat. If it is true, Swanson's account of the entertainments offered in his "Red Dome" perhaps vaguely foreshadowed later movie palace extravaganzas. *The exhibition...consisted of 2,000 feet of motion pictures, the singing of the "Holy City" by an illustrated song singer, posés plastique, fire and serpentine dancing staged with proper electrical effects, electric glass water fountains on each side of the stage, a spray of water from the proscenium arch on which stereopticon slides were projected, silk rags with electric fans underneath and gelatine red effects thrown on them while they were blown in the air from the stage floor.*[11]

Between 1903 and 1905 another type of structure emerged which was specifically adapted to motion pictures. George C. Hale of Kansas City built for the St. Louis Exposition an imitation Pullman car in which moving pictures taken from moving trains were projected. The attraction was billed as "Hale's Tours and Scenes of the World." The entrance to the "theatre" was fashioned to resemble the observation platform of a caboose, and the ticket collector was sometimes dressed as a train conductor. About 70 patrons, ensconced in regulation coach seats, could watch life-sized tracks seemingly disappearing under the coach and spectacular scenery flashing by on a screen or sheet at the "forward end." Special effects heightened the illusion; these were provided by "an elaborate equipment of levers, pulleys, wheels, and sound-making devices."[12] In addition, the structure was frequently joggled either mechanically or by an attendant outside. Thus, the patron not only heard the locomotive whistle, the wind rushing by and the brakes being applied, but he was jolted and tipped from side to side as the "train" rounded a curve or gathered speed. Motion pictures had yet to find a home in a solid, permanent structure. Many exhibitors adopted Hale's device; imitation trains proliferated as an amusement park attraction. As well, they appeared in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto by about 1905;[13] but the novelty of the exhibition soon wore off, a contributing factor being that exhibitors were hard-pressed to change their programmes often enough to attract new patronage, in spite of the fact that films were being produced expressly for Hale's Tours.

Until about 1905-06 such shortages of films generally obliged exhibitors to keep moving. They usually bought a limited quantity of films from producing companies and exhibited in as many locations as it took for their prints to wear out. Permanent movie theatres were not established in quantity until there was sufficient film available for rent to exhibitors from film exchanges to allow for regular changes of programme on one site, and until the advent of the story picture. When these conditions were met, the general standard of motion picture exhibition took no great leaps forward.

6, 7 Two Canadian "converts." *6*, A converted barn in Dundas, Ontario, ca. 1909. (*Archives of Ontario.*) *7*, The Dreamland in Edmonton about 1910. (*E. Brown Collection, Archives of Alberta.*)

Between about 1905 and 1907, more or less permanent cinemas were established in small converted stores, dance halls and converted penny arcades. Though these were their habitual locations, they could also be found in skating rinks, deconsecrated churches, or in virtually any building (preferably on a main street) that was available at a reasonable rental (Figs. 6, 7).

To convert a small commercial establishment into a movie theatre, enterprising exhibitors replaced the store fronts with a set of doors and a small wooden box office set back from the sidewalk, thus creating a tiny, windswept "lobby" which was decorated with florid movie lithographs. The strident music and announcements of a phonograph and a barker in this area were additional enticements. Usually, the theatre's name was inscribed on either a large canvas, wooden or electric sign over the entrance doors.[14] Some of these premises were perhaps 25 feet wide and 100 feet long and, as auditoriums were narrow, dark, and ill-ventilated. They seated as many as the room would hold, either on unfastened "kitchen" chairs, wooden benches nailed together in rows, or on folding chairs rented by the day from undertaking or catering establishments. (In the latter case, patrons were forced to stand when the owners reclaimed their chairs.)[15]

When there was a full house, the auditorium was oppressively hot; a 1907 store show exhibitor recalled that "there was an average of two women fainting every Saturday night, and they were wedged in so tight they couldn't fall."[16] On such nights, the air in the auditorium quickly became stale and sour. Some measure of relief was afforded by thoughtful exhibitors who installed small wall fans (which mostly churned up stale air) or who occasionally left a door open. From time to time, vain attempts were made to deodorize the auditorium by aiming a garden sprayer filled with cheap scent over the heads of the assembly.[17]

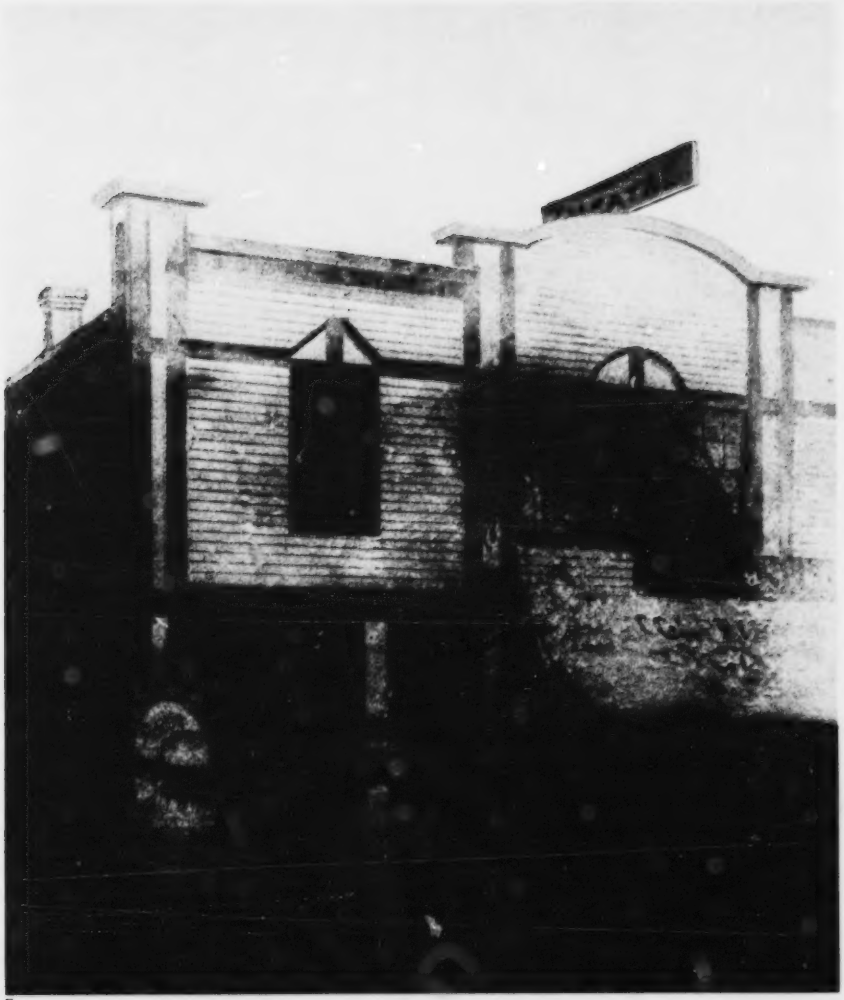
It was widely assumed that the best picture was projected in the darkest auditorium, thus any windows were covered with black cloth (or even paper), and interior decorations were, in most cases, non-existent or minimal.[18] Often the projector was merely roped off in the middle or at the back of the room. If a cloth-covered projection booth was provided, it was usually barely large enough for one projector and the operator, and he could not move about without agitating the "walls" of the booth. Like many of his colleagues, the operator in the tin-lined booth at the Vitascope on Mount Royal East in Montreal could not stand upright.[19] The projectors were hand-cranked, and were equipped with a stereopticon attachment, frequently used to project a slide asking for "One Moment Please."[20] The film fed through the projector accumulated in a heap either in a galvanized iron tank or, in the "cheaper" houses, in a barrel, cloth bag, or a basket on the floor. When the film broke, the operator was obliged to paw around in the tangle of

6

film to find the right end. He was not always successful, an early exhibitor remembered, and "when the reel was run off the next time, the last part would come first, then the next part would probably be upside-down, and the end came in the middle of the picture."[21]

A painted or plastered wall, a bed sheet or a large canvas served as the screen. In front of it, a "classy" store theatre had a small stage or platform used by the lecturer who interpreted the movies and by singers of "illustrated songs." Illustrated songs were a variety show invention, but they usefully filled the interval between reels in a movie house. The ballad singer (or singers) was accompanied by a pianist (installed on or near the "stage") and by a series of stereopticon slides appropriate to the mood and story of the song.[22] (The editor of *Moving Picture World* once unkindly suggested that the singers worked with slides so that the darkness would spoil the aims of projectile throwers in the audience.)

The pianist (who was sometimes also the ballad singer) played an accompaniment for the movie, but in



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many cases this was simply whatever he felt like playing or knew by heart. A few houses in 1908 had a three-piece orchestra consisting of a pianist, a violinist and a drummer. If the members were in a playful mood, they might race each other, and "the heroine could die to the tune of 'Turkey in the Straw' played four times the usual speed for all the orchestra cared."[23]

The programme was changed every 15 to 30 minutes, and the patron was charged five cents though theatres with elaborate illustrated song presentations often levied a dime (Fig. 8). These five-cent theatres, considered the province of the poor and uneducated, swarmed across the continent after 1905 and were largely concentrated in poorer shopping districts and slum areas. They were disdained, apparently, as dens of vice by large sections of the population.[24] According to Adolph Zukor, his first theatre, "The Comedy," was "not an exclusive theatre. In fact, the ushers carried blackjacks."[25]

Store theatres, or, as they came to be called, nickelodeons, are usually discussed in secondary works on the film industry as forerunners of the movie palace. They have received this attention partly because the phenomenon was fairly short-lived and widespread, and partly because of their jarring contrast to the movie palaces built only ten years later.[26] Yet there appears to be comparatively little published research on the genesis and evolution of the vaudeville house, which movie

palaces more closely resembled.[27] Like the palaces, vaudeville houses followed the basic design of the legitimate theatre with balconies, orchestra, boxes and stage. Though they paled beside the opulence of the great movie palaces, many vaudeville houses were pretentiously appointed.

The Keith-Albee circuit is reported to have built...the finest theatres in the world for vaudeville. Beautiful lobbies with oil paintings that cost thousands of dollars, rugs that cost more thousands, dressing rooms that compared to the finest hotel suites....They were cathedrals.[28]

But even the earliest movie theatres aspired to middle-class acceptance and money. One of the earliest, if not (as is often claimed) the first regular commercial cinema, opened at 262 South Main Street in Los Angeles in April 1902, was advertised by its owner, Thomas L. Tally, as "The Electric Theatre. For Up-to-date High Class Entertainment. Especially for Ladies and Children" (Fig. 9).

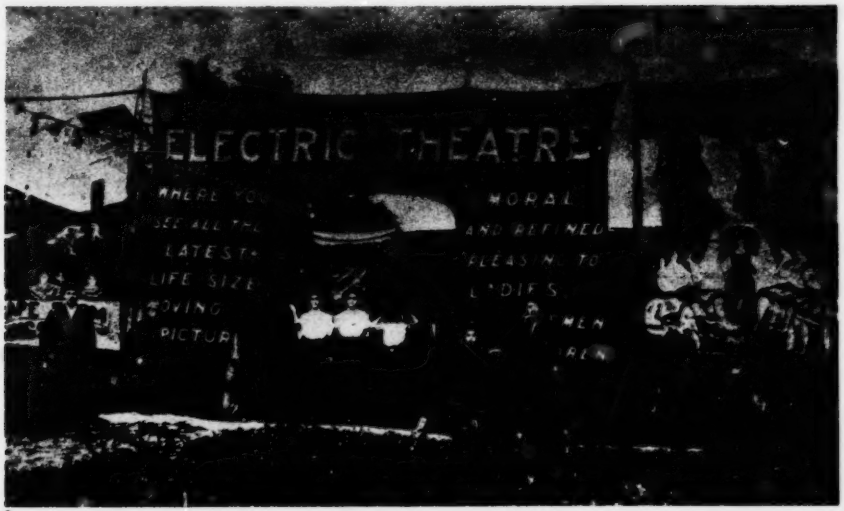
In October of the same year Canada's first lasting movie house, the "Edison Electric Theatre," was opened by John A. Schuberg at 38 Cordova Street, Vancouver. One of its printed programmes for February 1903 announced that an usher was in attendance to see that the ladies obtained desirable seats.[29]

As a travelling showman, Schuberg had exhibited movies for two weeks in 1898 on Cordova Street. He recounted that he had "rented a fairly large, empty warehouse...., set up the

GRINDING THE CRANK
WITH THORNTON FISHER
THEM WAS THE GOOD OLD DAYS
OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT
5¢
AND THIS WAS THE PRICE OF ADMISSION
I GUESS IT'S A RAILROAD TRAIN
NO, NO SAVE IT'S A BOAT
LOOKS LIKE RAIN TO ME
AND YOU COULD ALMOST TELL WHAT THE PICTURE WAS ABOUT
(IF FLICKERED SO AND GEE, HOW THE FILM WAS STREAKED)
I REMEMBER WHEN THEY USED TO TURN A BARN INTO A MOVIE THEATRE
SOME DAY THERE'LL BE EIGHT REEL PICTURES!
HEY OFFICER, CALL THE WAGON - HERE'S A NUT!
A GUY WHO PULLED THIS WAS TAKEN FOR A LUNATIC
OH GOSH, I GUESS I'LL BUY ME A ROLLS-ROYCE OR SOMETHING
AND IF THE PROPRIETOR TOOK IN $5 A NIGHT HE THOUGHT IT WAS RAINING MONEY.
WHY DON'T YOU GO INTO PICTURES?
YOU INSULTING DOG!
AND THE STAGE STAR WAS INSULTED WHEN THE MOVIES WAS SUGGESTED.
SO I SAYS TO HER, I SAYS—
$$$
AND THE PIANO PLAYER BANGED A WHEEZY INSTRUMENT AND TALKED TO A FRIEND AT THE SAME TIME.
BY GOLLY, IT'S WONDERFUL HOW THEY MAKE 'EM MOVE—
MIRACLES WILL NEVER CEASE—
WHAT MAKES 'EM GO, PAPA?
LOOK AT THE FUNNY MAN!
OOH!
YEE-HEE—
AND FATHER COULD SHOW THE WHOLE FAMILY A BIG NIGHT ON $5. YES, THEM WAS THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

8

9 This photograph is often identified as Thomas Tally's 1902 Electric Theatre in Los Angeles. It appears to be a canvas-fronted fairground show. (*Canadian Film Institute.*)



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equipment near the front and hung the screen at the back. As the show could only run about 30 minutes, seats were not necessary." But Schuberg provided no comparable description of his 1902 Edison Electric beyond the biographical comment that he opened "a similar house" in 1903 in Winnipeg in a high-ceilinged storeroom.[30]

Tally's Electric Theatre offered movies as the exclusive entertainment, while Schuberg's Edison Electric supplemented the programme with vaudeville acts. Though the absence of film exchanges and the scarcity of films must have precluded frequent and regular changes of programme, both enterprises were quite successful and their owners opened other theatres.[31]

The astonishing commercial success of John Harris and Harry Davis' "Nickelodeon" opened in Pittsburgh in June 1905 was the real impetus behind a flood of store-theatre openings. This theatre does not seem to have initiated an exclusive motion picture programme on a permanent basis as it is sometimes maintained. Probably, it became the most famous of the early movie theatres because it made a great deal more money than its predecessors.[32] The owners were among the first to infuse the showmanship into their store theatre enterprise which was eventually to lead the industry to construct movie palaces. They adopted the name "Nickelodeon" for their establishment, a combination of its admission price and the Greek word for theatre. A projector, a phonograph and a white sheet were installed in an empty store, and the auditorium was dressed up with theatre chairs from the local Grand Opera House. Harris and Davis also introduced alot of stucco, burlap, paint and incandescent lights as well as piano accompaniment to the silent drama.[33]

The success of this theatre coincided with the establishment of film exchanges, and in 1906 so many store theatres opened that in October of that year *The Billboard* of New York reported,

"No one is in a position to estimate the number of these exhibits which are now in operation, for an estimate today would be worthless tomorrow. In all big cities they seem to be on every business block."[34]

This was also a significant year for Canadian exhibition. The first lasting exclusive moving picture theatre in Toronto, "The Theatorium," was opened by John Griffin in March, 1906 on Yonge Street near Queen, near the site of the present Yonge Theatre (Fig. 10). Griffin described the Theatorium as *"not much more than a hole in the wall, for it was only seventeen feet wide and a hundred feet deep. But it was a first-class site. That's where people were passing up and down."*[35]

Moving pictures and variety acts were offered for five cents. Griffin noticed that his admission price seemed too low: many people were ashamed to be seen going in. He raised the price to ten cents and so prospered that, together with his son Peter he eventually operated the Majestic, a legitimate theatre converted to vaudeville and movies, and eight store theatres in Toronto as well as a number of combination (vaudeville and movie)

theatres and store shows in other Ontario centres including Hamilton, St. Catharines, Sarnia, Chatham, Woodstock, Thorold, Welland, Kingston, and Brockville.[36]

The Theatorium was a marked contrast to Toronto's deluxe vaudeville house, Shea's Yonge Street, built in 1899. According to a contemporary newspaper account, Shea's lobby was beautiful, its walls tiled in white with large oval mirrors in each panel, surrounded by wreaths in rose and green tile. The reviewer was particularly impressed with the asbestos drop curtain, "the Chief thing of beauty," on which was a painting, "The Rising of the Mists," by Gustave Hahn.[37]

What was to become the first national Canadian circuit was begun in the fall of 1906 by Bernard Allen and his sons Jay and Jule, American emigrants from Bradford, Pennsylvania. They opened a store theatre (also called the Theatorium) on Colborne Street in Brantford, Ontario, which they equipped with 150 kitchen chairs and a bed sheet tacked on a rough board frame for a screen. With its continuous show for five cents admission, it was so profitable that the Allens could afford to spend $2,000 equipping "The Wonderland," their second theatre in Brantford.[38] By 1909, the Allens had formed a film exchange to serve their growing circuit. The chain soon spread to other western Ontario centres, and eventually was expanded from Quebec to British Columbia (Fig. 11).

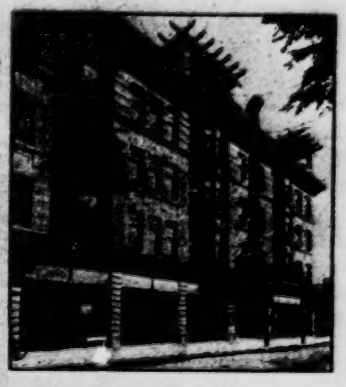
Another Canadian chain was started in 1906 by C. W. Bennett of

10 Toronto's first permanent movie house, John Griffin's store theatre on Yonge Street. Originally called Theatorium, its name was changed to The Red Mill by the time this photograph was taken. (*Canadian Film Digest; photo courtesy of Theatre Department, Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.*)

11 A 1909 Allen Theatre in Berlin (Kitchener) Ontario. Handmade and movie posters substitute for a marquee. (*Archives of Ontario.*)

12 Members of the Bennett vaudeville theatre circuit. On the right, a closer look at Bennett's theatre, Ottawa (later the Dominion). (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

The ONLY SURE WAY to provide a competence for later years is by systematic saving NOW
The BEST WAY to save systematically is to open a Savings Bank Account and deposit therein a certain sum every week or every month
The BEST PLACE to open a Savings Bank Account is (in the opinion of many) at a Branch of
The Royal Bank of Canada
BRANCHES IN OTTAWA—
Cor. Sparks and Elgin Sts. - Geo. Kydd, Manager
Cor. Bank and Somerset Sts. - W. R. Kirkpatrick, Manager
Cor. York and Dalhousie Sts. - James G. Ogilvy, Manager



Bennett's Theatre

Where the T. M. A. Benefit was held week of May 4.

12

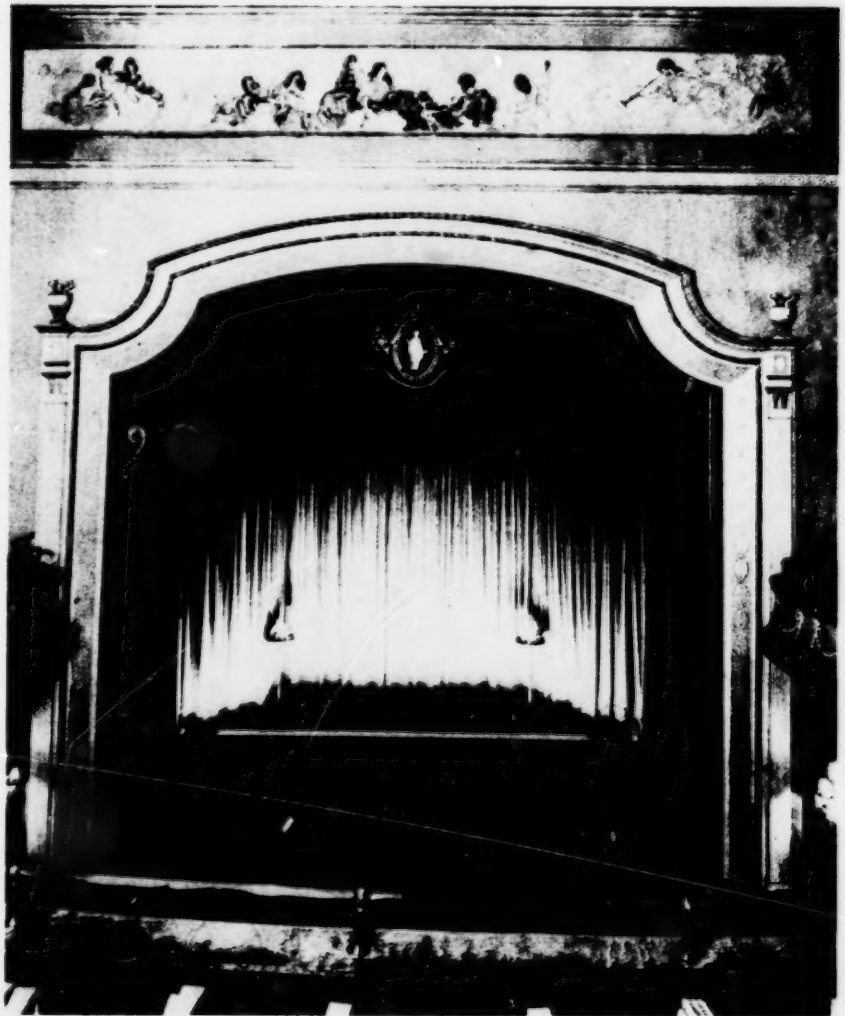
London, Ontario. Bennett Theatrical Enterprises were mostly concerned with vaudeville theatres, though they operated several movie houses. Bennett establishments could be found in London, Hamilton, Ottawa, St. Thomas, Montreal, Quebec City, Saint John, Halifax and Sydney (Fig. 12). The circuit foundered when it attempted to expand into South America. By 1909-10, its theatres had been sold, mostly to local businessmen.

Bennett movie theatres were uniformly named "Unique," and seem to have been little better than store shows. Bennett vaudeville theatres were affiliated with the Keith circuit and were considerably grander. "Bennett's," one of the circuits vaudeville theatres in Hamilton, was *a veritable jewel with decor of light green and red, with red plush seats and red plush curtains in the boxes which were embellished with cupids and floral designs and brass*

13 View of proscenium arch and stage area of the Savoy vaudeville theatre in Hamilton, operated by the Bennett circuit between about 1907 and 1909. (*Famous Players Limited.*)

railings. The theatre even had an isolated chamber for acts featuring trained animals.[39]
It was designed by E. C. Horn of New York, and built in 120 days in 1907 (Fig. 13).

Bennett's vaudeville theatre, which opened in December 1906, introduced regular showings of moving pictures to Ottawa under the patronage of the Governor General, Lady Laurier and the Mayor. Although the movies were only a minor attraction on the bill, the *Journal* reviewer enthused that they were "the best ever shown in Ottawa."[40] He was also fulsome in his description of the new theatre's interior, which he judged as *handsome – decorated with many beautiful paintings and scenic effects. Decorative effects in entrance are of Pompeian style with Bacchante figures worked out to advantage. In the dome of the main part of the ceiling, the paintings are magnificent, being worked out in old Italian style. The centre figure represents music, with a fairy dancer on one side and on the other figures representing music.*
The paintings were the work of Frank Righetti of New York, and the theatre's architect was E. C. Horn. In addition, the theatre provided 18 exits, a ladies' parlour with a "courteous maid," writing material and recent magazines for waiting patrons, and a telephone messenger service.[41] For the next 14 years this theatre, renamed the Dominion when the Bennett circuit expired, was Ottawa's "number one" vaudeville house.



13

Exterior of Ernest L. Ouimet's "Ouimetoscope," one of Montreal's first enduring movie houses. (*Canadian Film Digest.*)

14

Within about a year of this theatre's successful presentation of motion pictures in a permanent location, at least three store theatres opened in Ottawa; the Unique (a combined penny arcade and auditorium) and People's on Rideau Street, and the Nickel at 140 Albert.

The year 1906 was also a key year for moving picture exhibition in Montreal. In January L. Ernest Ouimet opened what was to become one of Montreal's first successful enduring movie houses in Poire Hall, a rented dance-hall and former vaudeville theatre on the corner of Ste. Catherine and Montcalm streets. It attracted so many patrons that in the spring it was closed for alterations. Its kitchen chairs were exchanged for theatre seats, its capacity enlarged from 450 to 600, and another entrance was provided on Ste. Catherine Street. Ouimet began imitating legitimate theatre operations, offering two shows a day and "illustrated songs," and reserved seats for 25 cents (Fig. 14). In April Ouimet opened a similar house in Karn Hall, another rented dance-hall, between Peel and Metcalfe on Ste. Catherine. He planned to shift the programme from the first to the second "Ouimetoscope" after a week's run. The second theatre (which was a second-storey establishment) closed about a month later[42] (Fig. 15). Nevertheless, the success of the first Ouimetoscope seems to have generated such nickel theatres as the Cinematograph Canada on St. James, the Starland and the Crystal Palace on St. Lawrence, the National Biograph on Notre Dame Street West, and the Nickel on Ste. Catherine Street West.

In May of 1907, Ouimet demolished his first theatre on Ste. Catherine and Montcalm. A building even more significant was to take its place. He opened on the site in August 1907 the first deluxe movie theatre on the North American continent. This Ouimetoscope reportedly cost about $50,000 and was one of the first movie houses constructed as such from the ground up. With dimensions of 42 feet by 150 feet, it seated 1,000 in plush surroundings and offered such amenities as a tiled lobby, reserved seats for 35 cents, a balcony, checkroom facilities and a house magazine. It operated on a theatrical basis, with two shows a day and a 10-minute *entr'acte*. A seven-piece orchestra and illustrated songs supplemented six reels of moving pictures (Figs. 16-18).[43]

According to Ouimet, the only other building at all comparable to the Ouimetoscope was a 1,000-seat movie theatre in Pittsburgh, apparently built for the purpose in 1906 or 1907 by Sigmund Lubin. His theatre had "an elaborate nickelodeon front," but unlike the Ouimetoscope operated as a "grind" house with five- and ten-cent admissions; its entertainment was two reels of moving pictures, one illustrated song and a piano player.[44]

In general, between 1907 and 1910, moving pictures were neither sophisticated nor long enough to warrant such exclusive surroundings, and the Ouimetoscope did not long maintain its splendid programme, and by 1910 had deteriorated to a "grind" house. Nevertheless, between about 1907 and 1912 many exhibitors relentlessly pursued respectability and the "family trade" by dressing up their makeshift or newly built theatres and by paying some attention to the comfort and safety of the audience.

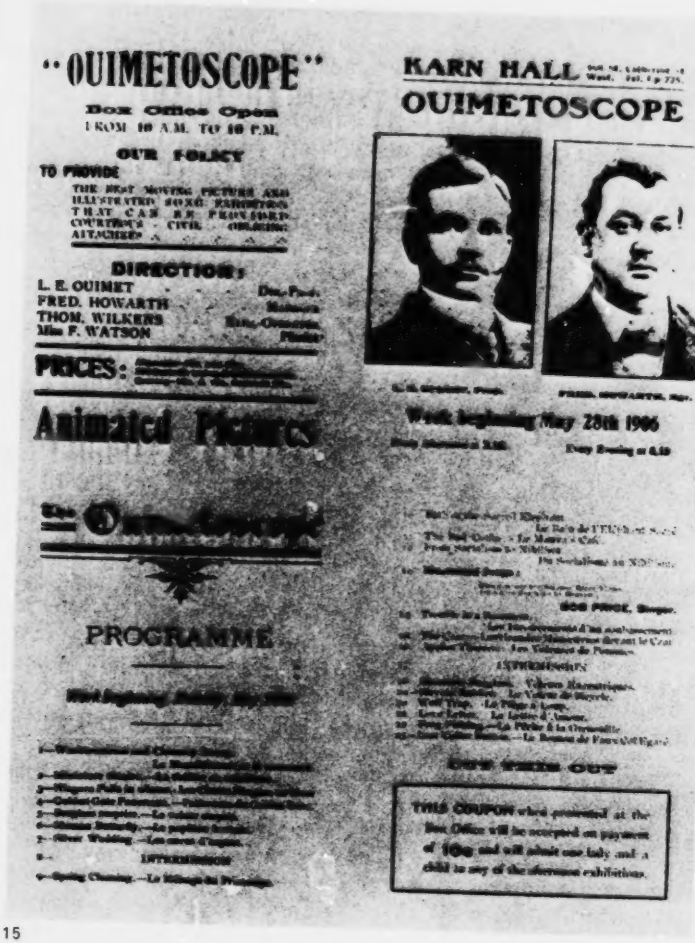
At first, most attention was concentrated on the building façade. Arched fronts (over the lobby and entrance doors) appeared at least as early as 1905, and by 1909 they apparently graced the majority of five-cent theatres. If they were symmetrical and proportional they created a pleasing effect, but many were not and the feature came to be known as a "Coney Island front"[45] (Fig. 19).

The fairground or midway past of moving pictures could be recalled in other exterior treatments which nearly put a circus wagon in the shade.[46] Lobbies and fronts were crowded with

15 Programme of the second Ouimetoscope, with a photograph of its young owner. (*Canadian Film Digest.*)

16 Exterior of the 1907 Ouimetoscope, the first deluxe movie house in North America. (*Canadian Film Digest; photo courtesy of National Film Board.*)

17, 18 Lobby and auditorium of the 1907 Ouimetoscope in January 1908. The motifs on the tiled lobby walls depict theatrical muses. In the auditorium, notice the orchestra pit, comfortable theatre seats, and the decorated balcony and box fronts. Evidence of the check room can be seen in the coatless audience. (*Canadian Film Digest; photos courtesy of National Film Board.*)


"OUIMETOSCOPE"

Box Office Open

FROM 10 A.M. TO 10 P.M.

OUR POLICY

TO PROVIDE

DIRECTION:

L. E. OUIMET — Dog. Prop.

FRED. HOWARTH — Manager

THOM. WILKERS — Bus.-Organizer

Miss F. WATSON — Pianist

PRICES:

Animated Pictures

PROGRAMME

KARN HALL

OUIMETOSCOPE

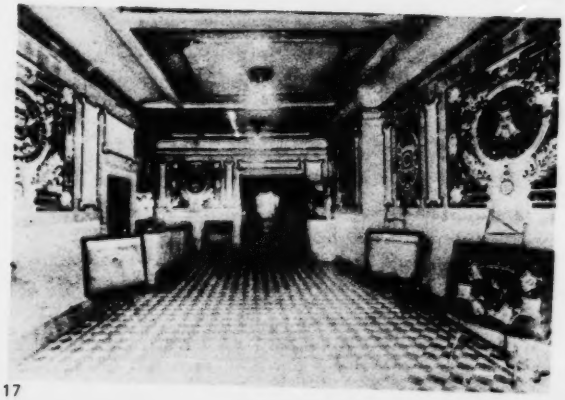
Week Beginning May 28th 1906

CUT THIS OUT

THIS COUPON when presented at the Box Office will be accepted on payment of 10c and will admit one lady and a child to any of the afternoon exhibitions.

15

16



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18

19, 20, 21, 22 Façades of "new, improved" movie houses. *19*, A "Coney Island" front, Princess Theatre, Melville, Saskatchewan. (*Moving Picture World*.) *20*, The Starland in Calgary, ca. 1909, with very faint glimmerings of movie palace glitter. (*Glenbow-Alberta Institute*.) *21*, The Starland in Montreal dressed up for the coronation of George V, 1911. (*Moving Picture World*.) *22*, A good example of gingerbread style – the Majestic in Winnipeg in 1911. (*Moving Picture World*.)

19

a profusion of cheap plaster decorations (always called "gingerbread decorations" by purveyors of good taste writing in *Moving Picture World*) which were painted colours that "shout[ed] louder than the most leather-lunged barker."[47] A quantity of electric lights supplemented these decorations, and were intended as enticements to passers-by, on whom exhibitors largely relied (Figs. 20-22).

To this purpose, Sigmund Lubin had introduced in 1906 or 1907 pressed metal fronts which were fitted over and camouflaged the old store fronts and extended well above the first storey. These could be bought for between $1,500 and $2,000 and, painted and strung out with electric lights, were meant to suggest that a "real theatre" lay behind the façade. The 250-seat Starland, opened on St. Lawrence Boulevard in Montreal in 1907, had a front of this type which,

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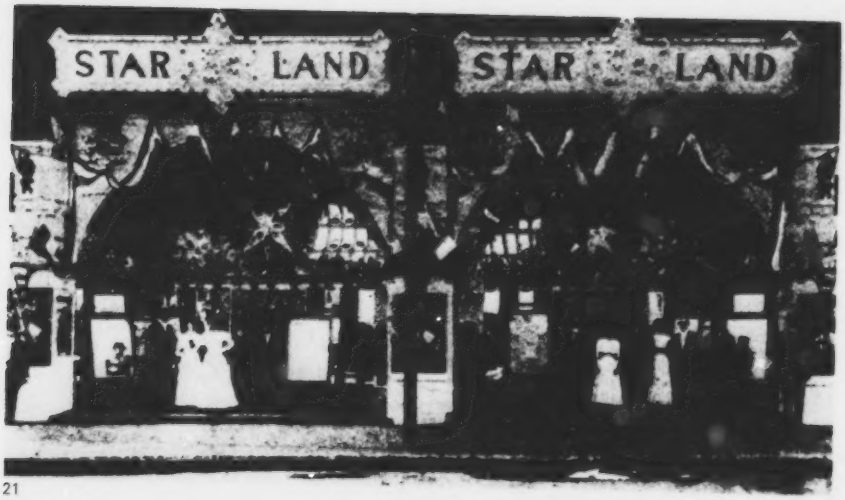

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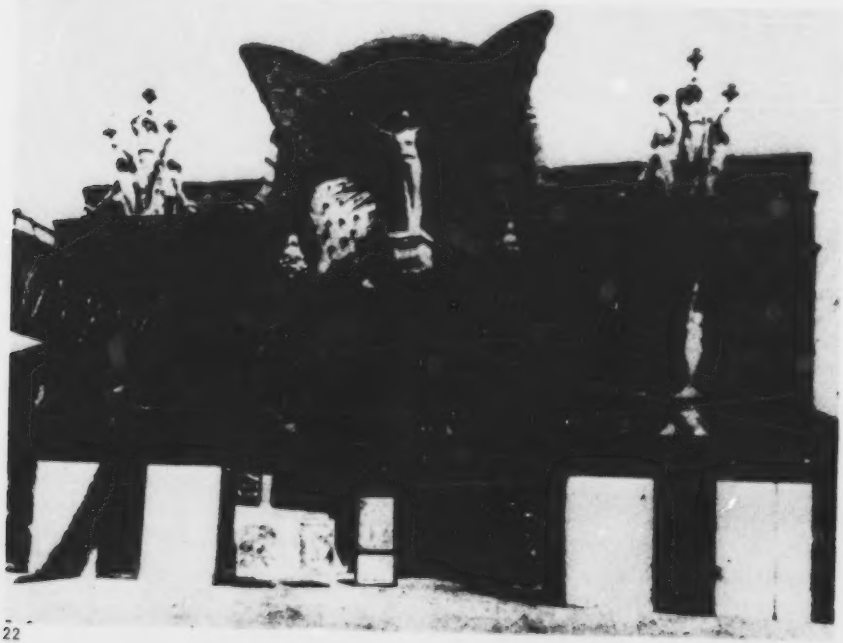
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unfortunately, fell victim to a fire not long after the opening.[48]

Other artifices to impress the middle class included "etched plate glass mirrors," "tiled flooring," potted plants, and "artistically framed" lithographs in the lobby area.[49] The second-storey Red Mill in Hamilton in 1907 (and a number of other theatres which possessed a flight of steps) dazzled patrons with "Rainbow Stairs." These were made of glass, and covered running water illuminated by varicoloured bulbs. The impression gained was that of walking up a waterfall.[50]

Nevertheless, a nickelodeon patron was often ushered from a bright and overdecorated front into a gloomy interior as, until indirect lighting systems came into vogue in about 1910, interior decorations could be considered virtually a waste of money. With the advent of aisle lights and properly dimmed and shaded auditorium lighting, interior decorations could be illuminated without interfering with the projection of the picture.[51] As well, patrons no longer had to grope and stumble around in the darkness attempting to find empty seats.

By about 1908, folding chairs had given way to "cheap tip-up chairs with veneer seats and backs." Unupholstered opera chairs also began to appear in movie theatres. Exhibitors were counselled in 1909 that "upholstered seats are not desirable...from any point of view," as unupholstered seats were cooler in the summer and perfectly comfortable for the comparatively

23 The Regent, opened in 1913, New York's first de-luxe movie theatre, designed by Thomas W. Lamb. (*Ben Hall Collection, Theatre Historical Society.*)

23

short time patrons were seated. Nevertheless, in about 1910 the spring seat with "pantasote" or fabric cover began to win adherents.[52]

Other features common to legitimate and vaudeville theatres appeared in some movie houses. These included sloped floors, balconies, waiting rooms, toilet facilities for staff and patrons, and fire exits. The phonograph and barker were replaced by a uniformed doorman and uniforms were provided for the ushers. These advances, to some extent, kept pace with the generally improved quality and entertainment value of moving pictures, but as well, were often made in response to new governmental regulations on safe moving picture exhibition.

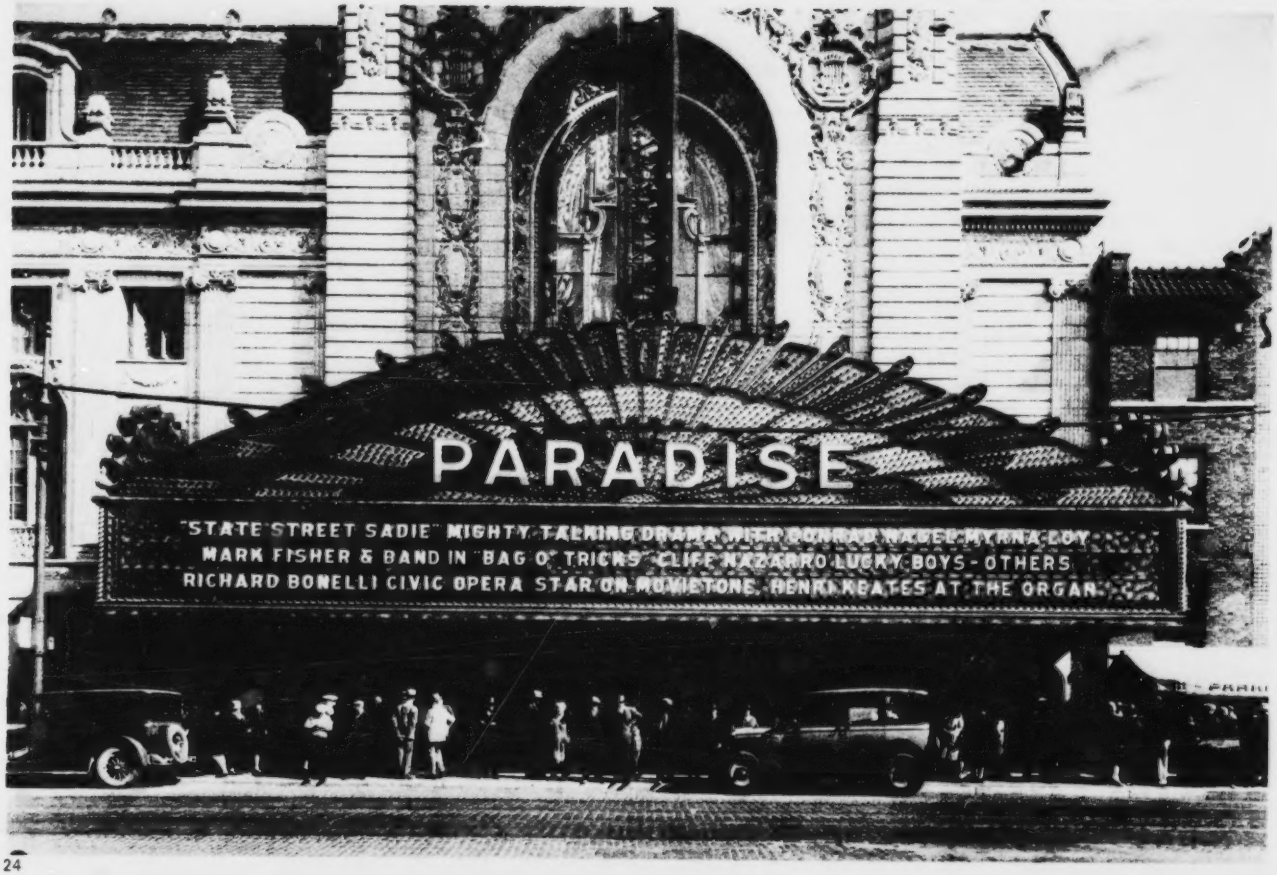
Like Ernest Ouimet, other exhibitors whose makeshift theatres had prospered began to build movie theatres from the ground up. However, between 1907 and about 1911-12, this type of movie house was probably the exception, and was by no means *ipso facto* de luxe. For example, Vancouver's Maple Leaf theatre built in 1907 accommodated 500 kitchen chairs. Indeed, many flimsy structures were hastily put up, as their proprietors did not expect them to last for more than one season.[53] Among the theatres of the new improved type that were operating in Canada in 1911 were the new Starland in Montreal, the Starland in Winnipeg, and the Princess in Vancouver. The Winnipeg Starland seated about 750 and was served by a four-piece orchestra. Its interior decorations were "in deep rose and bronze with many hanging flower baskets."[54] Shortly after its opening, a *Moving Picture World* correspondent provided the following description of the 450-seat Princess in Vancouver.

The front of the building follows in its general design the Romanesque style of architecture. Inside, it is modern in every respect. The auditorium is lighted by hundreds of softly colored incandescent lights, so arranged that there is no glare, the light being thrown against a mauve ceiling and reflected downward. The picture screen of white satin is placed back of the proscenium arch. The arch is fringed on the inner side by a beautiful decoration in art glass, through which the lights shine softly....The slope of the floor is so arranged that every person in the audience can see over a picture hat....On the right side of the auditorium, at the side of the stage, is a comfortable retiring room, with all modern accessories.[55]

It was the successful introduction of the multi-reeled or feature-length film that demanded the most fundamental changes in exhibition. High turnover, the basis of nickelodeon profit, was no longer feasible.[56] Furthermore, such feature-length moving pictures as "Quo Vadis?" and "Judith of Bethulia" rivalled legitimate productions in content, "class," and length, and needed more elevated and formal screening surroundings than fusty nickelodeons. In New York City, the producers of these features leased first-class Broadway theatres and were confident enough to charge first-class Broadway prices.[57] The movies had achieved a measure of respectability.

Henry L. Marvin decided to enter the exhibition field with the idea conceived by Ouimet five years before: that motion pictures required a special, "high class," expensive theatre. In February 1913 he opened the Regent at 116th Street and 7th Avenue, the first deluxe theatre built expressly for showing movies in New York City (Fig. 23). From the Regent it was a short step to the glorious excesses of the movie palace.

24, 25 Decorative components of movie palace flamboyance. *24*, Marquee of the Paradise theatre, Chicago, John Eberson, architect. (*Chicago Architectural Photographing Company Collection, Theatre Historical Society.*) *25*, Auditorium of Ambassador theatre, St. Louis, George and C. W. Rapp, architects. (*Chicago Architectural Photographing Company Collection, Theatre Historical Society.*)


PARADISE
"STATE STREET SADIE" MIGHTY TALKING DRAMA WITH CONRAD NAGEL-MYRNA LOY
MARK FISHER & BAND IN "BAG O' TRICKS" CLIFF NAZARRO LUCKY BOYS - OTHERS
RICHARD BONELLI CIVIC OPERA STAR ON MOVIETONE. HENRI BATES AT THE ORGAN.

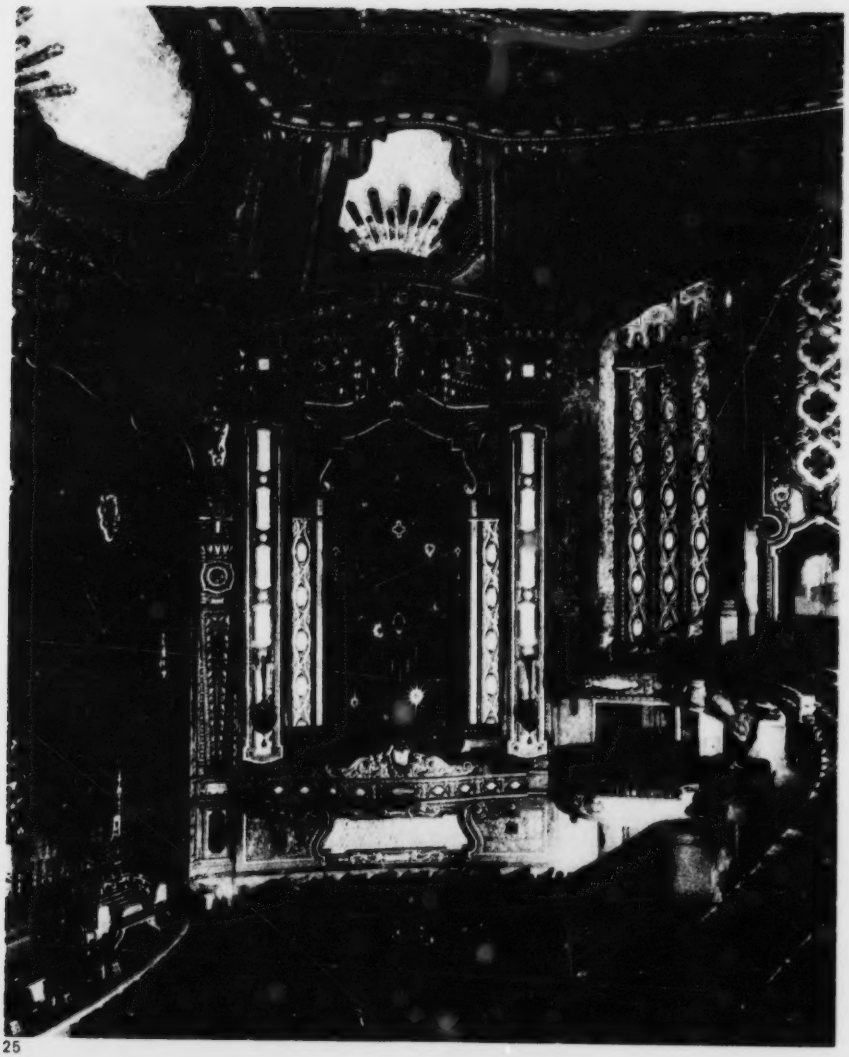
24

Zenith–The Palaces

When the Regent opened, *bigger and more respectable theatres were being converted to the showing of films. New York, in 1913, could count 986 movie houses–of all kinds–though even the largest and finest of these suffered from all the architectural ills of the day: tiers of avalanching galleries supported by view-killing columns, hard wooden "opera chairs," and becalmed ventilation systems.*[1]

An architectural innovation which distinguished the Regent from pretentious vaudeville houses and legitimate theatres of the time was the replacement of the usual "double cliff hangers" by a single balcony with a gentle slope and "exemplary sight lines." Instead of being the usual obstructions in the orchestra, the supporting balcony columns were set behind the last row of seats. This solution established a first-class reputation for the Regent's young architect, Thomas W. Lamb.[2]

The Regent also differed in dedicating "its operahouse splendor, with its gilded stage boxes and fancy curtains" to motion pictures. Neverthe-



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less, for the first ten months of its existence, the Regent was also distinguished by being a commercial failure. Its patrons were "embarrassed and baffled to find all this grandeur surrounding something as unimportant as movies."[3] Then S. L. ("Roxy") Rothafel burst upon the scene and transformed the place into a success.

It was Roxy's touch as the theatre's manager that set the tone for its movie palace successors. He introduced rose-tinted lighting in the auditorium, a new ventilating system and a scored orchestral programme suited to the changing moods of the silent feature. The sound was provided by a 16-piece orchestra, a separate string ensemble and New York's first pipe organ in a theatre.[4]

In April 1914, Thomas Lamb's and Roxy's next theatre, the Mark Strand, opened on Broadway and 47th Street, New York, and earned the name of "Broadway's first genuine movie palace." Its decoration, entertainment and staff were far grander than those of the Regent. The Strand accommodated 3,000 in plush upholstered seats in an auditorium "done as a sort of neo-Corinthian temple topped by a vast cove-lit dome."[5]

The opening of the Strand's cosmetic suite was marked by a formal tea, Richard Barthelmess and Marion Coakley, stars of "The Enchanted Cottage," presiding. They were justified in

celebrating "a lounging room...of satin and rosewood, with gold leaf on hand-carved decorations, and furnished in Louis XVI furniture and tapestries."[6]

The Strand's splendid opening night so impressed the *New York Times* drama critic in 1914 that he wrote,

Going to the new Strand Theatre last night was very much like going to a Presidential reception, a first night at the opera, or the opening of a horse-show....I must confess that when I saw the wonderful audience last night in all its costly togs, the one thought that came to my mind was that if anyone had told me two years ago that the time would come when the finest-looking people in town would be going to the biggest and newest theatre on Broadway for the purpose of seeing motion pictures I would have sent them down to visit my friend, Dr. Minas Gregory at Bellevue Hospital.[7]

A series of articles in *Moving Picture World* in 1910 had complained that the level of moving picture exhibition in New York City was much lower than that found in other locations. The principal cause of this disgrace was that the city's building laws prohibited the erection of a moving picture theatre seating more than 300. Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Chicago—in fact, "all the great cities of the Union"—could boast of up-to-date deluxe picture theatres which provided for the creature comforts of their patrons. And this type of theatre, the editor had been told, found "its best expression" abroad, in London, Paris, Rome and Berlin. But in 1914, after the openings of the Regent and the Mark Strand, the editor could assert that "this country leads the world by a safe margin in the number of modern, large and well-appointed moving picture theaters."[8]

Together the Regent and the Strand played a role similar to that of the 1905 Pittsburgh nickelodeon in influencing the evolution of movie theatre construction. The prerequisites for a movie palace were established, though theatre buildings and their seating capacities, stages, orchestras and theatre organs became bigger and more expensive, their decoration and ushers gaudier, and entertainment programmes more spectacular.

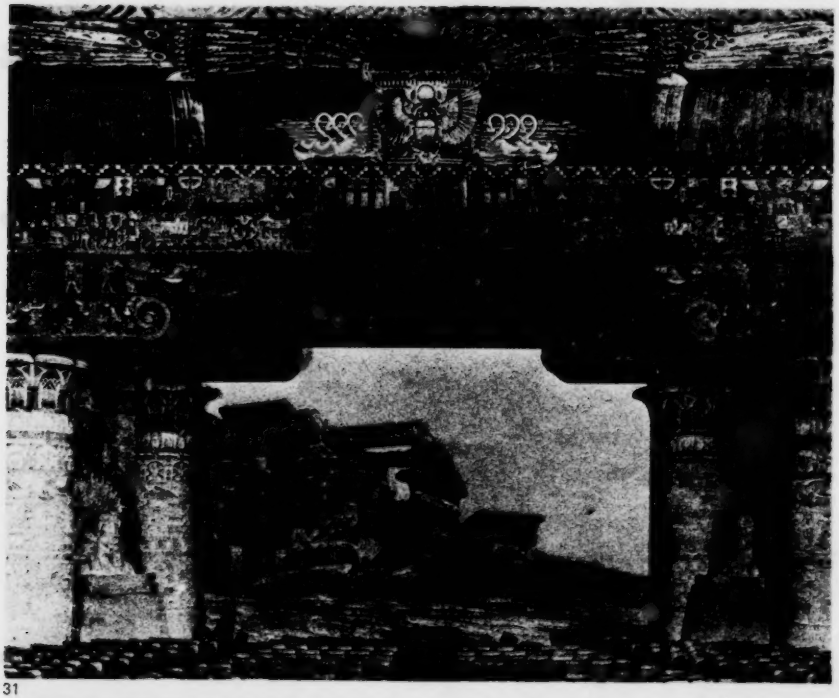
The main ingredients of a movie palace were a central location in a large urban area, immense seating capacity, huge grand foyer and lobby areas and extravagant, eye-popping decor. A movie palace was covered with gilded plaster shaped into all manner of embellishment, and often studded with classic columns, arcades of mirrors, and crystal chandeliers. It was also characterized by palatial lounges and restrooms and regiments of smartly uniformed ushers. Standard movie palace equipment included galleries of oil paintings, acres of broadloom and plush upholstered seats, damask and velvet draperies and a blazing marquee. The palace's hallmarks were comfort, cleanliness and opulence. It provided "super" stage shows and first-run film showings,[9] accompanied by a mammoth theatre organ and a resident orchestra at the highest scale of admission for motion picture entertainment (Figs. 24-26).

Only a few hundred of these palaces were built, and exclusively in major metropolitan centres because of their cost and large patronage requirements. Far more numerous were the deluxe movie theatres that were built in small towns and in larger urban areas throughout the movie palace era. The scale, entertainment programme and decor of a movie palace distinguished it from a deluxe movie theatre. Movie palaces might entertain 6,000 patrons and deluxe houses usually accommodated under 2,000; compared to movie palaces, they had much smaller lobbies and foyers, and fewer, less flamboyant ushers. Their stage shows, if they offered any, were not as grandiose, and they were equipped with smaller theatre organs and orchestras.

While the decor of most deluxe houses was mainly derived from that of 19th-century legitimate theatres, there were no limits to the sources of inspiration for the movie palace architect, and no decorative style or combination of styles was too excessive or outrageous to consider. (Because of this, Dorothy Parker termed the movie palaces' decorative style "early marzipan.")[10] From 1914 to 1922 "Adam" and "Empire" decorations were applied on a scale hitherto unknown, but after 1922 nearly every decorative style known to man found its way into

31 View towards the stage of Grauman's Egyptian theatre, Hollywood, designed in 1922 by Meyer & Holler. (*Wurlitzer Catalogue.*)

32 A stage show rivalling the ostentation of movie palace decor. (*Theatre Historical Society.*)



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the movie palaces (Figs. 27-29). Not only were Baroque, Medieval, Moorish, Far Eastern, Persian, Hindu, Byzantine, Babylonian, Aztec and Egyptian decorative themes translated into plaster and paint, but new decorative styles were born (Figs. 30, 31). William Fox was offered a choice between "Rolls Royce" and "Hispano-Suiza" decorations for his two Detroit theatres by competing firms. He finally opted for "Eve Leo" style, named after the distinctive decorative style of his wife, Eve Leo Fox.[11]

In addition, ornamentations in legitimate and vaudeville theatres tended to be concentrated on the auditorium ceilings, proscenium arches, and balcony and box fronts. But the architects of these great "democratic" theatres – the movie palaces – tended to splash interior decorations from stem to stern.

The deluxe movie theatre was within the means of a small corporation, or perhaps even an individual businessman. Movie palace ownership, on the other hand, was virtually limited to vast multi-million-dollar theatre-owning chains such as Loew's, Fox and Paramount, which usually supplied motion picture and vaudeville entertainment to their theatres from their producing companies and booking offices.

Because of the circuit ownership, many movie palaces resembled one another, as a successful formula in one city would be applied elsewhere. But there were intense rivalries between these powerful corporations, and each tried to outdo the other in the largest urban areas in providing magnificent showplaces for more and more lavish entertainment programmes.

Of course, the grandiose theatres were primarily dedicated to showing motion pictures, and after about 1932 they did this exclusively. Numerous theatres of such size and magnificence would not have been built if there had been no movies to present in them : moving pictures were tremendously popular and were a cheap form of entertainment, both for the patron and the exhibitor. Also the theatre was no longer limited in its seating capacity by the necessity of seeing a performer's features on the stage. Still, the stage attractions were an integral part of the programme of a large urban theatre whose opulence in many cases effectively complemented its grand stage and orchestral presentations (Fig. 32).

The evolution of the movie palace was closely related to major developments in the motion picture industry. The impact of the feature-length film has already been discussed. Further, a film like D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" grossed millions, and was seen by more people than had attended any classic stage presentation in 50 years. It also had cost an unprecedented amount of money. This aspect of film production became related to movie palace architecture. Extravaganzas seemed to require extravagant surroundings.[12] On the correspondence between film content and movie palace decor, a British author noted ;

Many of the great cinemas seem imbued with the feeling of particular movies. One can imagine the Babylonian orgies of Intolerance *among the Egyptian splendours of Grauman's,... Lilian Gish wanly isolated in the organ tower of the Astoria, Brixton, and Douglas Fairbanks, sword in hand, leaping down from a toothed Moorish arch in Finsbury Park.*[13]

The palaces were monuments to the virility and permanence of a new industry which not two decades before had inhabited ramshackle studios and temporary theatres and had been considered by many to be a manifestation of a passing fancy.

At the same time, the construction of movie palaces was an excessive attempt by the industry to sweep its somewhat disreputable origins under the rug. More was needed than rat-free, clean, ventilated buildings to banish the middle-class prejudice against what had been considered lower-class entertainment.

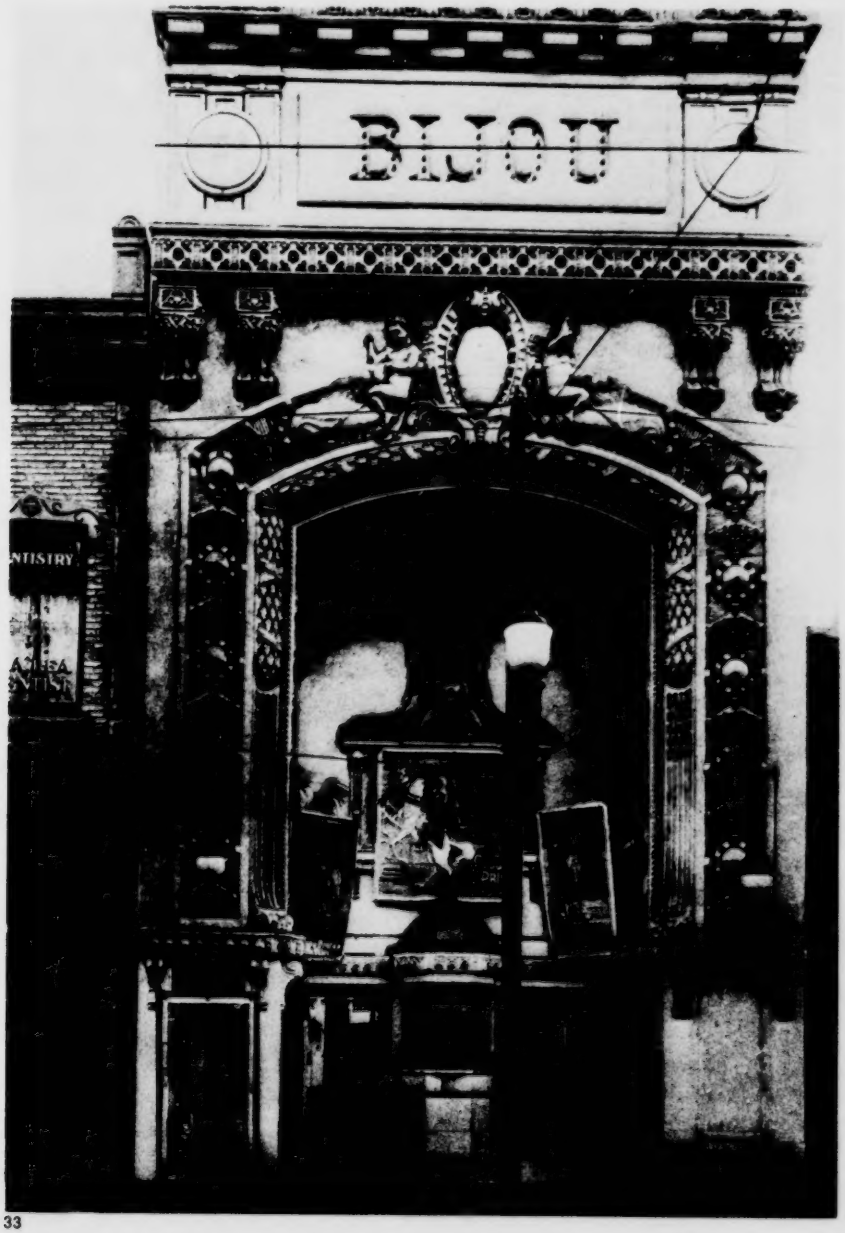
On the other hand, some of the most sumptuous palaces were built in slum areas in large urban centres. Thomas Lamb declared that his palaces were designed to lift the "average patron" out of his "daily drudgery."[14] George Rapp, another prominent movie palace architect, justified the flamboyance of his buildings.

Watch the eyes of a child as it enters the portals of our great theatres and treads the pathway into fairyland. Watch the bright lights in the eyes of the tired shopgirl who hurries noiselessly over carpets and sighs with satisfaction as she walks amid furnishings that once delighted the hearts of queens. See the toilworn father whose dreams have never come true, and look inside his heart as he finds strength and rest within the theatre. There you have the answer to why motion picture theatres are so palatial.

He went on to say, "here is a shrine to democracy where there are no privileged patrons. The wealthy rub elbows with the poor – and are better for this contact." Harold Rambusch, head of a major decorating firm, had another view. "In a sense, these theatres are social safety valves in that the public can partake of the same luxuries as the rich and use them to the same full extent."[15]

The palaces provided a good deal of the excitement of going to the movies. They could even be a consolation if the feature was disappointing. The gilded palaces were "just like in the movies," and were designed to put the patron in a mood receptive to the entertainment offered. According to the most renowned showman of the period, S. L. Rothafel, "theatre entertainment...takes place, not only on the stage, but in the box office, in the lobby, the foyer, the restrooms, and the auditorium itself....As a consequence, the architects' work has a direct bearing upon the commercial success of the theatre he designs."[16]

3, 34 Pretentious façades from 1913 and 1914. *33*, Calgary's Bijou, a movie theatre built in about 1914. (*Glenbow-Alberta Institute.*) *34*. The National Theatre (previously the Victoria) in Winnipeg in 1918, a combination house opened in 1913. (*Manitoba Archives.*) (*See* p. 34.)



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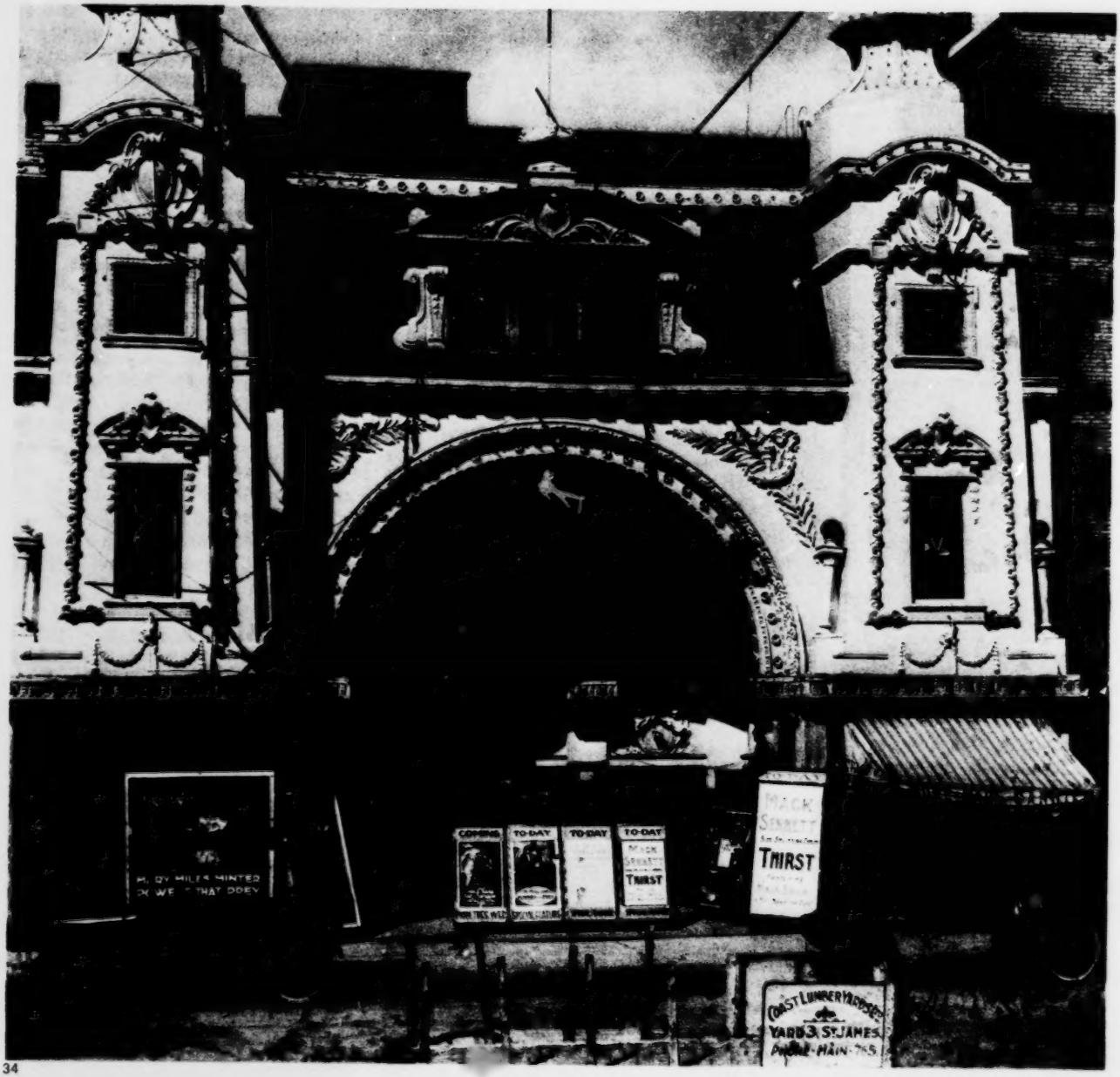
The gaudy, giddy, glorious movie palaces occupied a brief era in American history which lasted less than two decades and spanned two international crises, the Great War and the Great Depression. In Canada the movie palace era was even more brief; it began in earnest after the First World War had ended. Its boom years were between 1919 and 1921. Comparatively few palaces were built in Canada after 1921, as by then there were enough of them to satisfy the requirements of most large urban populations in Canada. As well, the Canadian palaces do not bear comparison with such great circuit showpieces as the Capitol or Paramount in New York, the Avalon in Chicago, the Midland in Kansas City, or the San Francisco Fox. In Canada, however, numerous deluxe movie theatres and "combination" houses (which offered both vaudeville and movies) were built between 1912 and the end of World War I (Figs. 33, 34). Among these were Halifax's 1,160-seat Casino, opened early in 1917 with a green, gold and pearl interior and a "Thermo" system of ventilation, and the Imperial in Saint John, opened in 1913. Built by the Keith-Albee vaudeville circuit, the Imperial vaunted six boxes, a balcony, and 1,800 seats, 800 of which were leather-upholstered. In addition to a "women's parlour" and a "men's parlour", it offered "a rest room for children." A large chandelier in the auditorium illuminated


TO-DAY
TO-DAY
TO-DAY
THIRST
COAST LUMBER MFG. CO.
YARD 3, ST. JAMES
PHONE · MAIN · 765

34

35 The glass-domed auditorium of the Dominion Theatre, Vancouver photographed in 1924. (*Famous Players Limited.*)

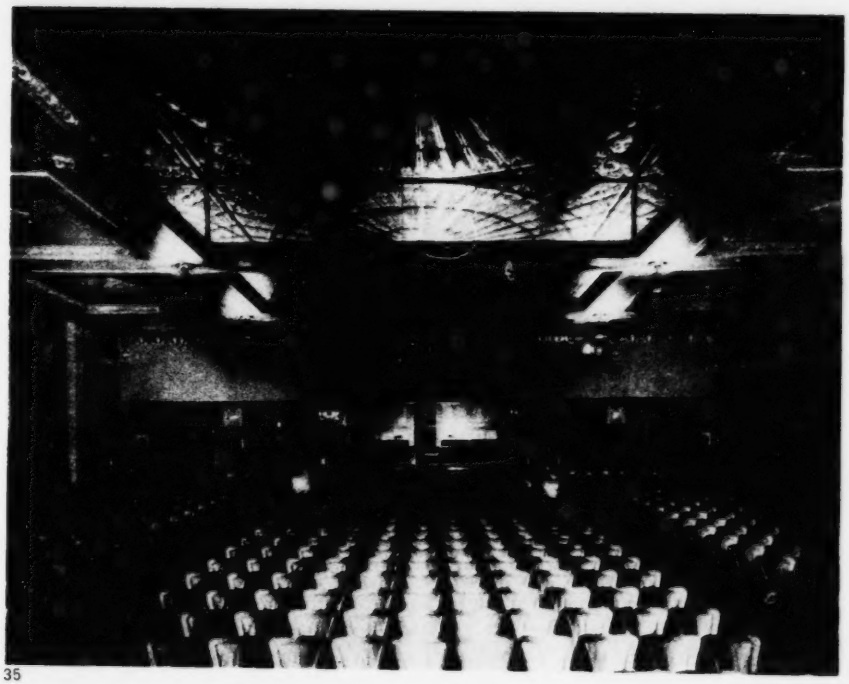
a colour scheme of "old rose, old ivory and Moorish tints with gold."[17]

In Quebec, the most splendid deluxe houses were, not surprisingly, erected in Montreal. In this category were the Colonial, Family, Imperial, and Strand, built between 1912 and 1913, and the Regent and the St. Denis, opened in March 1916. Of this group, the St. Denis was the most remarkable and seems to have been Canada's first movie palace. It reportedly cost well over $1 million to build, seated over 2,500, and employed a 14-piece orchestra and a "$30,000" Hope-Jones Unit Orchestra (or theatre organ). Though stage shows were included in its programmes, the primary entertainment was moving pictures.[18]

Moving Picture World provided the following description of the theatre's interior in 1918:

The decorations...are pleasing, being carried out in classical style with the utmost refinement and restraint. Instead of having draperies enhancing the beauty of the interior the desired effect is achieved by stucco, worked in bas-relief, painted in cream, gold and blue. On the walls and ceilings a certain richness is obtained by medallions...from the Italian period. The great sunbursts over the main boxes could be characterized as Egyptian, while the general squareness and simplicity of the whole design is Greek. Thus, although no one period of art has been adhered to, ideas have been drawn from every country to form one complete and satisfying whole.[19]

The *Gazette* reviewer at the opening had characterized the decoration



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of the auditorium differently; to him it was "a free interpretation of the Adams [*sic*] style depending chiefly on color schemes to emphasize the decorative effects instead of using the familiar plaster figures."[20]

Despite these attractions, the first Canadian movie palace was a white elephant for at least the first two years of its existence. Its lack of patronage was explained as the result of a poor location, far from the theatrical centre. As well, a *Moving Picture World* correspondent surprisingly recorded, the bane of the St. Denis' existence was that it was smack in the middle of a French Canadian district, and "the French-Canadians are not theater-going people, as years of statistics and experience have proved."[21]

The St. Denis' closest Montreal rival in size and decor was the Imperial which originally seated over 2,000 and was built by the Keith-Albee vaudeville circuit. Its foyer and lobby were decorated with "marble wainscoting," "fumed oak" woodwork and bronze chandeliers, and a "broad marble staircase" led patrons to the mezzanine. Ivory, gilt and old rose were prominent colours in the auditorium, which was graced by a "huge bronze chandelier," loge boxes, large plaster figures above

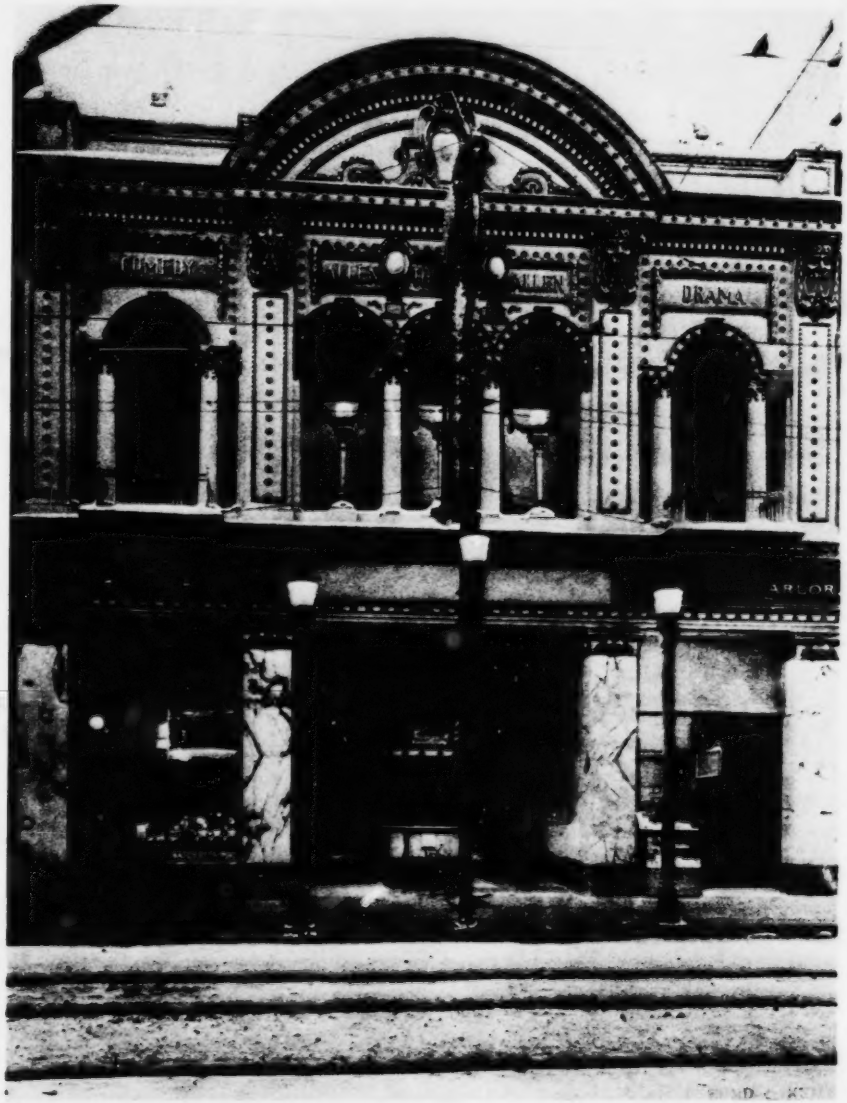
36, 37 Calgary's Allen theatre. *36*, Façade; the murals on the left and right behind the columns on the second floor perhaps serve to give the impression that the façade is a Hollywood false front. (*Glenbow-Alberta Institute.*) *37*, View of auditorium from the balcony in 1930. The organ "pipes" are exposed, as they would be in a church. Later, it became fashionable in movie theatre architecture to obliterate the memory of the organ's church past, to conceal the pipes and to display the console prominently. (*Famous Players Limited.*)

the sidewall arches, and a Wurlitzer theatre organ, probably the first in Montreal.[22]

Though not in the same league as the St. Denis, the 850-seat Strand, the 650-seat Colonial (built in 1912-13) and the 1,000-seat Regent (opened on the same day as the St. Denis) were deluxe photoplay houses which catered to "fashionable" clientele. The Strand's exterior sported "green mosaic" decorations, the Colonial's lobby was domed and lined at floor level with "marble tile," and the Regent's wall panels were "finished in imported French silk tapestry."[23]

Among notable deluxe photoplay and combination theatres built in western Canada were the Dominion and Rex in Vancouver, opened in 1912 and 1913 respectively; the National and Pantages in Winnipeg, opened in 1913 and 1914; Pantages in Edmonton, opened in 1913, and the Allen in Calgary. Of these theatres, probably the most unusual decor belonged to Vancouver's Dominion. The dome in the auditorium was partly composed of ornamental art glass in amber, green and red. The effect produced was enhanced by judiciously placed mirrors[24] (Fig. 35).

The Calgary Allen was built in 1913 and was the Allen chain's first deluxe theatre. It accommodated 840, had a "commodious" balcony, and offered organ accompaniment for its movies (Figs. 36-37). This theatre received considerable attention in



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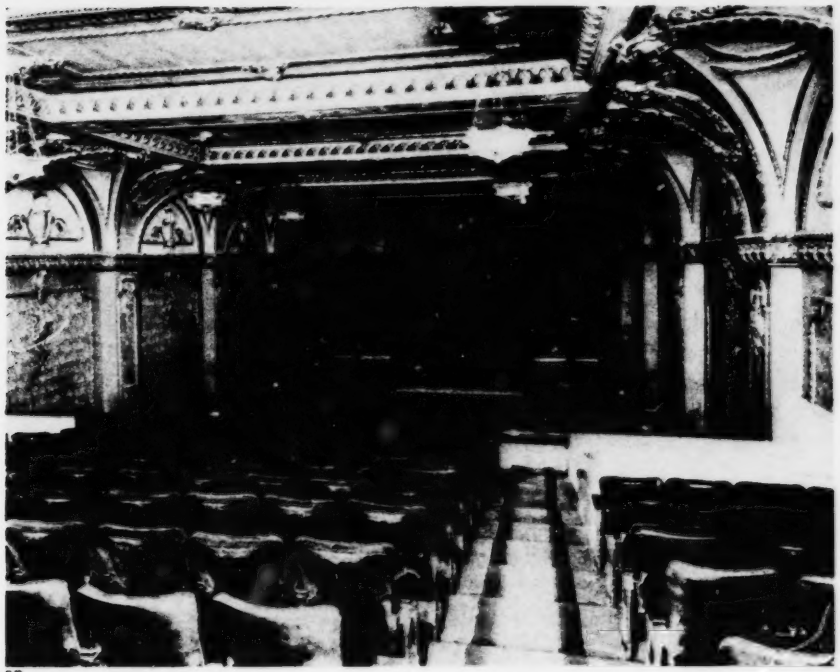

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sources consulted. In 1919 it was called "the first really modern house in Canada," and in 1925 "the first [in Canada] of the large and impressive exclusive picture palaces."[25] In 1913 the Allen may have had the most comfortable seats, the best projection and the largest balcony of any Canadian movie theatre, but its designation as a "palace" is probably unjustified. Compared to other exclusive movie theatres of the time, its interior was elaborately decorated but, unlike subsequent movie palaces, the decorations used neither rivaled nor surpassed those of a legitimate or vaudeville theatre.

Like the Calgary Allen, Toronto's Regent theatre, opened in August 1916, figured prominently in sources consulted. It was the first house of what became the biggest Canadian theatre chain – Famous Players Canadian Corporation – and was Toronto's first super-deluxe theatre dedicated chiefly to movies (Figs. 38, 39).

This is not to say that no grand Toronto theatre exhibited movies before 1916. Between the Theatorium opening in 1906 and the opening of the Regent, four large and luxurious combination houses had been built in the city: Shea's Victoria opened in 1910, Loew's Yonge Street theatre in December 1913 and its bizarre rooftop Wintergarden two months later, and Shea's Hippodrome in 1914.[26]

Unlike the other deluxe movie theatres that have been mentioned, the Regent was a rebuilt legitimate theatre. It had opened as the Toronto Opera House in about 1880 on Adelaide near Bay. Its programme had deteriorated to "lurid melodramas" by the time it became the Majestic in 1902. By about 1910, it had been turned into a combination theatre.[27]

In 1916, N. L. Nathanson, E. L. Ruddy, J. P. Bickell, W. J. Sheppard, and James Tudhope formed the Regent Theatre Company and converted the Majestic into the Regent which they advertised as "Toronto's beautiful picture playhouse – the finest theatre of its kind in Canada."[28] Thomas W. Lamb was the architect of this transformation. He arranged for the theatre's two balconies to be replaced by one with a "long, easy gradient," and for the construction of a mezzanine floor and lounge rooms. "The seating arrangement, interior decoration and street front were entirely changed;" little remained but the walls of the original theatre. The final product seated 1,475, and also accommodated a 14-piece orchestra and a theatre organ.[29]

Like the *New York Times* critic at the opening of the Mark Strand, the *Mail and Empire* reviewer at the Regent's opening was inspired to recall the bad old days of the movie theatre.

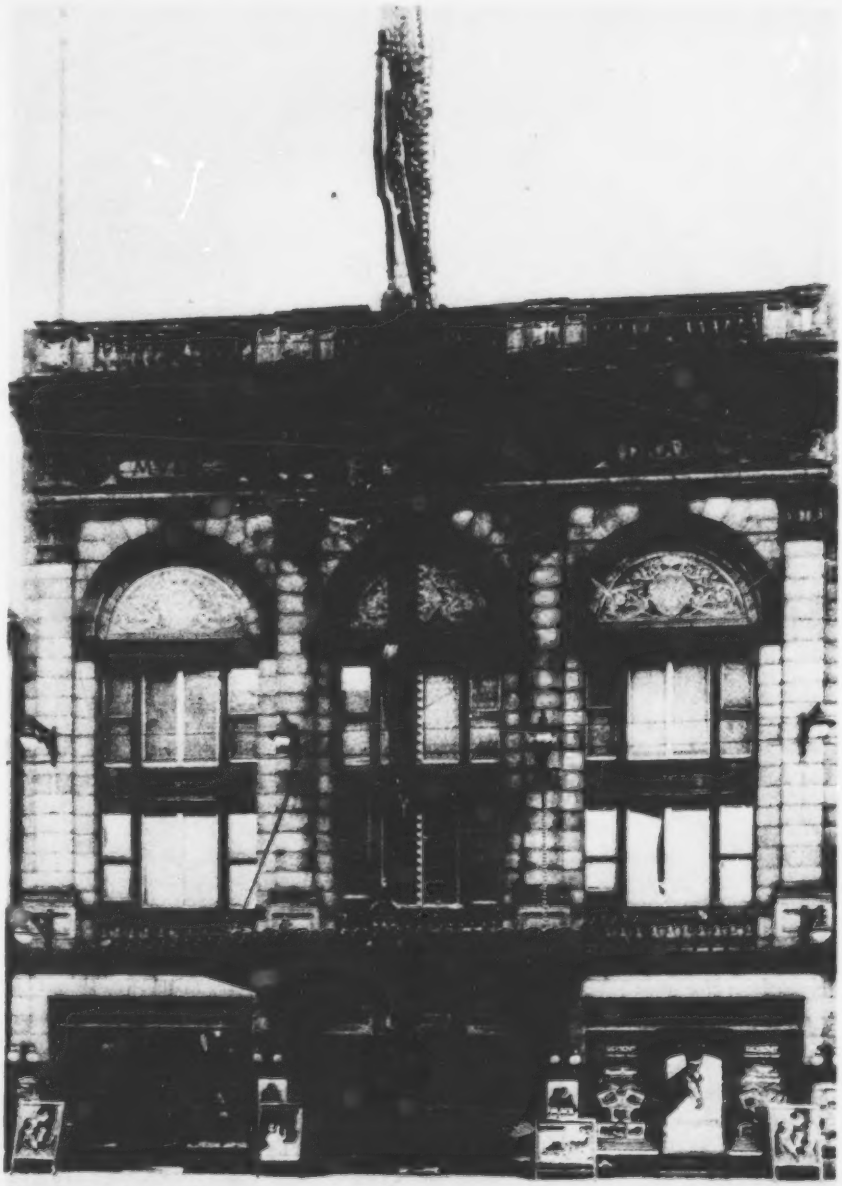
When the first local moving picture theatre opened... some years ago in an out-of-the-way corner that

38, 39 Photos taken about 1924 of the Regent's façade and auditorium. According to a *Mail and Empire* review on 26 August 1916, the interior was "finished in white and gold, the effect being uniformly rich." (*Famous Players Limited.*)

had not proved much use for anything else, undecorated walls that were thick enough to keep out the light, plain, hard chairs that left kinks in a person's back, and a white curtain were considered good enough equipment for the experimental enterprise. No one would have prophesied in those days that the time was coming when the opening of a theatre for screen drama would be a social event. Last night saw a gathering for the formal opening of the Regent theatre that indicated how much the movies has [sic] *risen in dignity in the past decade. There was an automobile line on Adelaide Street that looked as though the season was at its height with a big attraction playing at a legitimate theatre.*[30]

At least one person in the opening night audience was slightly disappointed. Bill Gladish reported in *Moving Picture World*,

An unfortunate part of the opening was that the house was not quite finished. The $11,000 Cassavant organ was not ready for use while several features of the handsome structure required finishing touches. There was sufficient in evidence, however, to arouse the unqualified admiration of the gathering. It was something entirely new for a Toronto audience to find itself able to roam through the promenade, reading, reception, and rest rooms -- all richly furnished and well



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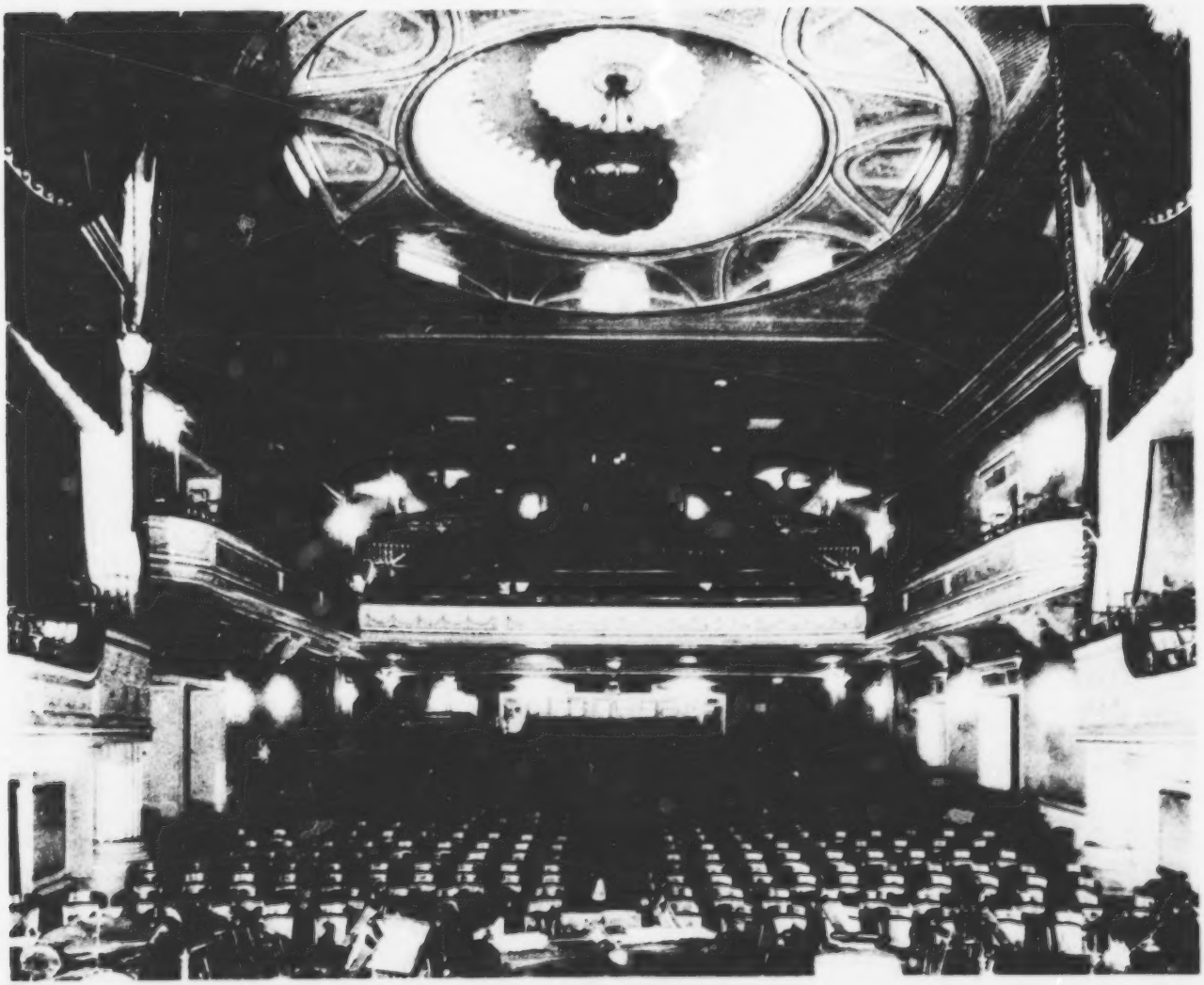

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40, 41, 42 The Allen (later the Tivoli) in Toronto, C. Howard Crane, architect. Photos taken in October 1930. This theatre, unlike the Regent, was built for movie shows. The geometrically decorated panels in the auditorium and foyer were probably recent additions, and do not harmonize with the interior's overall Adam-derived decorative scheme. (*Famous Players Limited.*)

40

aired....The aisles and stairs of the house are covered with rich red carpet, while the general decorations are of the so-called Adam's period, gold and blue in color.[31]

In 1917, the 1700-seat Allen theatre (later named the Tivoli) was built at Richmond and Victoria, apparently to "outdeluxe the Regent."[33] These two theatres were the first shots fired, so's to speak, in a theatre-building war between the Allens and the Nathanson circuit – later Famous Players Canadian Corporation – during which most of the Canadian movie palaces were built, as these circuits vied for patrons "with the energy of peacocks in a mating dance."[34]

The Toronto Allen was the circuit's first luxury theatre in eastern Canada, and "the first large house [in Toronto] to be constructed from excavations to roof for the picture projection."[35] The interior was decorated in the by then familiar Adam style, predominant colours being old rose, gold and grey. But it also contained some features unusual for a large Toronto theatre. No stage as such was provided, and the organ were installed in an area immediately under the

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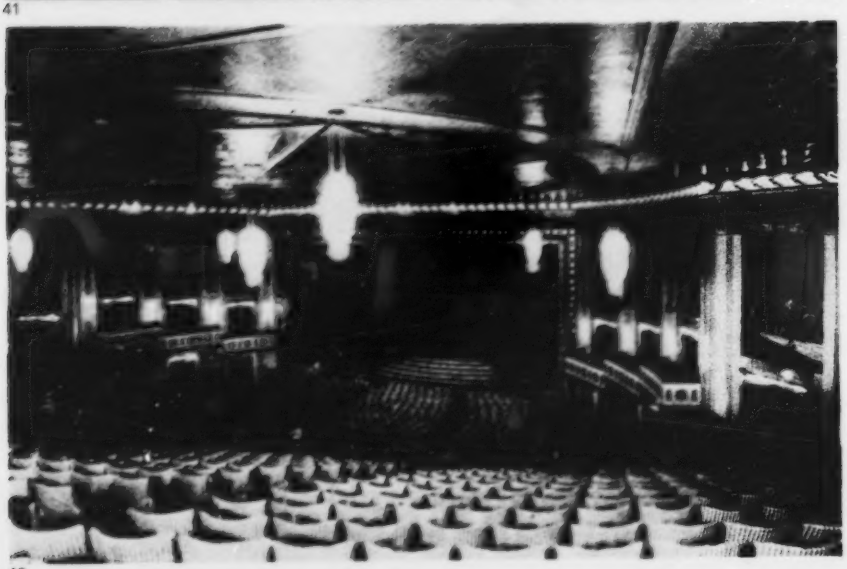

42

screen. As well, access stairways were replaced with inclined ramps, and instead of a balcony or gallery, tiers of seats were built up in Roman amphitheatre style (Figs. 40-42).[36]

Following the opening of this theatre, the Allens quickly won the first campaigns of the circuit war. By 1919 the Allen circuit was predominant in Canada, controlling 45 theatres in many major metropolitan centres (*see* Fig. 119). In 1920 it was operating nine showy theatres in Toronto (all with capacities under 2,000) – the Danforth, Parkdale, Beach, Beaver, St. Clair, Bloor, College and Royal as well as the original Allen.[37] Two of these – the Royal and the Beaver were bought ready-made. The rest were designed for the Allens by C. Howard Crane of Detroit, a noted movie-palace architect who was responsible for nearly every Allen theatre built in the circuit's golden years.

Among Crane's other Canadian designs were the Allen (later the Capitol) in London, opened in 1918; the Allen (renamed the Metropolitan) in Winnipeg, opened in 1919; the Allen (later the Strand) in Vancouver; the Allen (later the Capitol) in St. Catharines; the Allen in Windsor and the Walkerville in Walkerville (whose names were changed to Palace and Tivoli respectively), all opened in 1920; the Allen (renamed the Palace)

43, 44, 45 Three more examples of C. Howard Crane's Canadian designs. *43*, Mezzanine foyer of Metropolitan theatre (previously Allen) in Winnipeg. *44*, Auditorium of Walkerville theatre (later the Tivoli) in Walkerville. *45*, Grand foyer and rear of auditorium of Allen's Palace in Montreal. (*Famous Players Limited.*)

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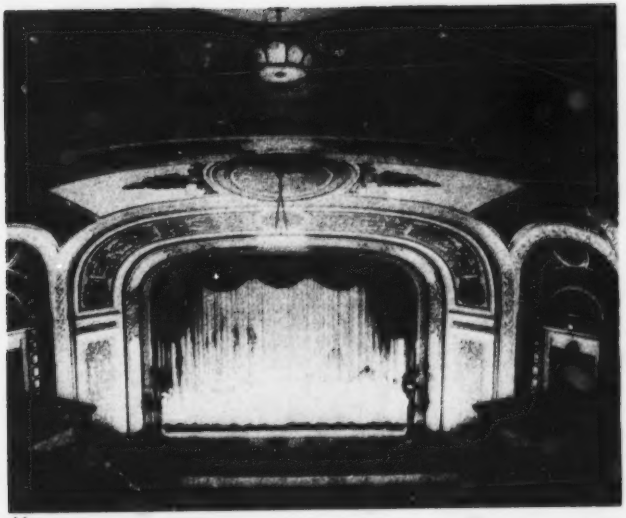

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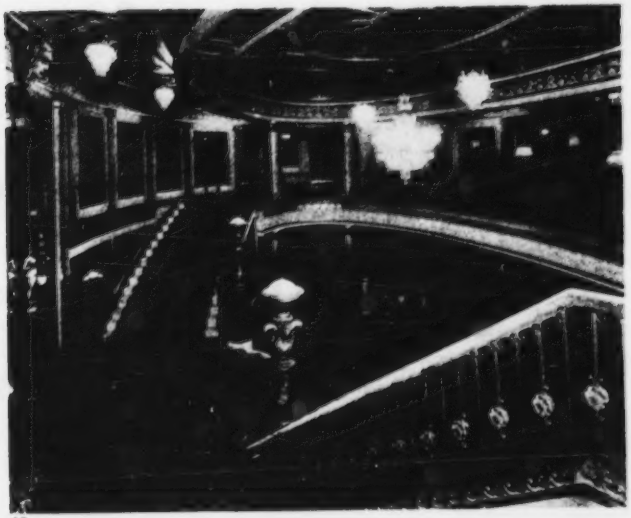

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in Calgary opened in 1921 ; and Allen's Palace in Montreal, opened the same year (Figs. 43-45). The Montreal theatre was the only house that Crane and the Allens built in Canada with a seating capacity of over 2,500 ; naturally, it was their most spectacular Canadian effort.[38] The opening programme was in keeping with the extravagance of the theatre (Fig. 46).

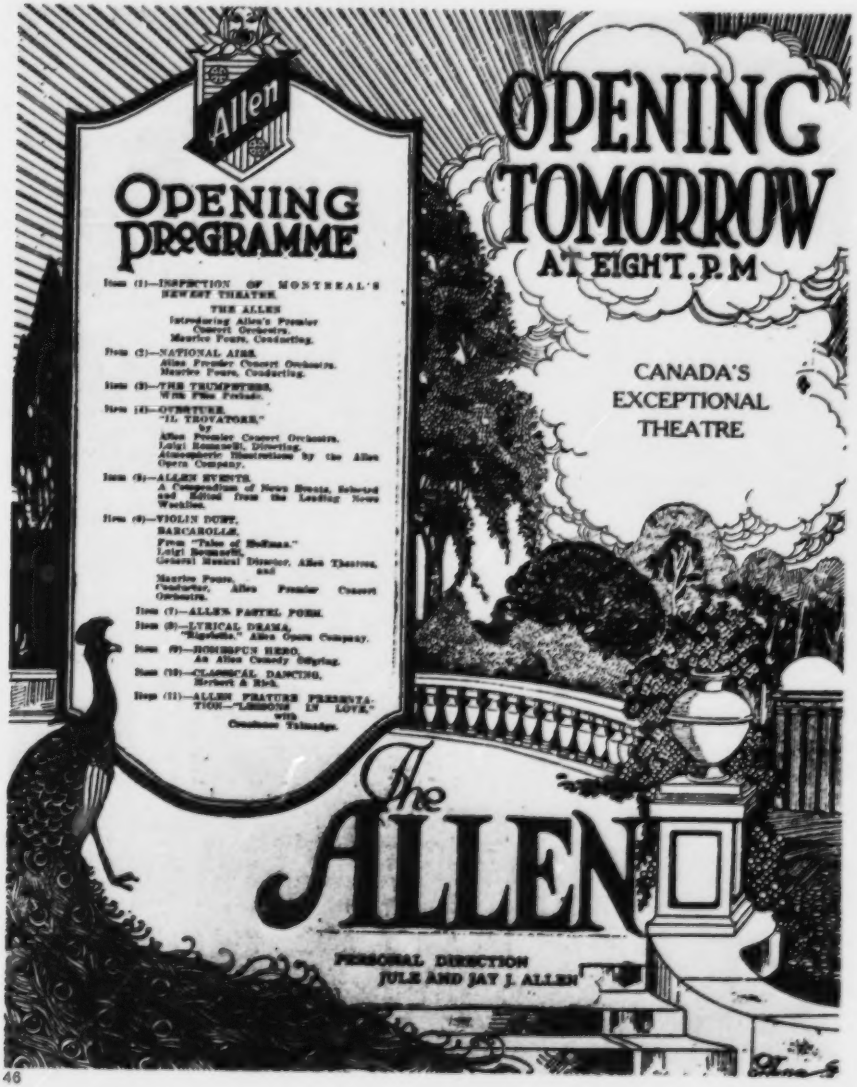
C. Howard Crane adhered to the "standard" or "hard top" school of movie-palace design. More or less following the Beaux Arts tradition of opera and vaudeville houses, the movie-palace architects in this "school" employed conventional neoclassical motifs and designs for their "basilica-like emporiums."[39]

The dean of the standard school, Thomas White Lamb of New York, was responsible for creating the largest and grandest Canadian movie palaces (Fig. 47).[40] He designed about 16 Canadian theatres between 1913 and 1921. Nine of these had seating capacities exceeding 2,000, and the Imperial (formerly Pantages) in Toronto with its capacity of 3,626 was the largest movie palace built in Canada. (New York's Roxy, by comparison, had a capacity of over 6,000.) To put Lamb's achievement in perspective, it should be noted that only about 17 Canadian theatres with capacities exceeding 2,000 were built before 1930 with moving picture exhibition firmly in mind.

Besides Toronto's Regent and Imperial theatres, Lamb's other Canadian commissions were four western houses for Famous Players Canadian Corporation – all named the Capitol – in Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria. He was the consulting architect in the 1927 rebuilding of what became the Capitol in Quebec City. He designed the Capitol (formerly the Temple) in Brantford (his only Canadian theatre not commissioned by one of the big circuits), the Capitol in Montreal, and all the vaudeville-and-movie theatres built for the Loew circuit. These included Loew's Yonge Street theatre and roof-top Winter-garden, opened in 1913 and 1914, and, between 1917 and 1921, Loew's Uptown in Toronto, Loew theatres in Montreal, London, Windsor, Hamilton, and Loew's Ottawa theatre.

46 The Allen (Palace) opening programme. *Gazette* (Montreal), 13 May 1921. The following description of the Allen's opening programme by a *Gazette* reviewer on May 16 may give some idea of the "atmospheric illustrations" provided: "The Overture [was] followed by the anvil chorus illustrated by a modern smithy scene set and a quartette of... voices. The tableaux which included real fire struck from the iron being effectively placed on either side of the stage between the Corinthian columns [*sic*]. The Miserere from Il Trovatore followed with the background of the prison and afterwards the famous duet from the final act of Rigoletto and the Donna e Mobile aria."

47 A 1928 portrait of Thomas W. Lamb. (*Motion Picture News*.)



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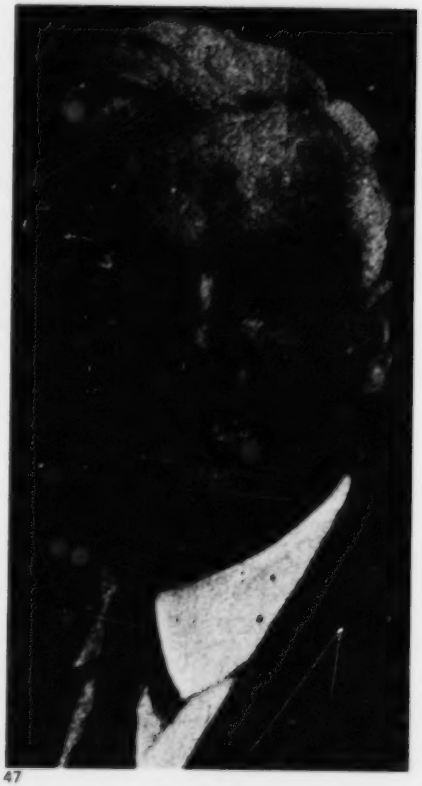

47

"Lamb and Adam"

With the exception of the Wintergarden, all Lamb's Canadian theatres generally resembled each other in their spatial organization and decoration, though they differed in scale and scope. His auditoriums were generally domed and supported large chandeliers; most of them had elaborately decorated proscenium arches, ceilings and sidewall arches. They were also characterized by large and extravagant colonnaded lobbies and foyers, and elegant lounges and waiting rooms.[1]

The exteriors of Lamb's theatres were "invariably treated in the classical manner, often faced with terra cotta blocks, simulating the work of the masters of the Renaissance or facsimiles of parts of the Louvre."[2] Like most movie palace fronts, they gave only a premonition of the glories that awaited inside, thereby reversing the nickelodeon principle of a very flashy front and a more solemn interior.

The interiors of Lamb's Canadian theatres (again, except the Wintergarden) were decorated in the "Adam style." Until about 1925, Lamb "hewed closely to the brothers Adam for inspiration, so much so that one critic suggested, only half in jest, that the firm's name be changed to 'Lamb and Adam.' "[3]

The Adam style was derived from the unique decorative treatment for the interiors of stately mansions and country houses devised by the 18th-century Scottish architect, Robert Adam (with the assistance of his brother James).[4]

The Adam style could broadly be described as neoclassical with a difference. Influenced by the domestic decoration of the ancient Romans and the decoration and colour employed by the Cinquecento artists, Adam departed from the prevailing English neoclassicism which demanded a ponderous interior treatment with stereotyped forms and decorations according to classical canons.[5] Though Adam did not foresake formal symmetry, he ignored these classical prescriptions, and lavishly applied graceful plaster ornamentation devoid of any constructional significance. He produced a fanciful, linear decorative style characterized by lightness, movement and elegance and which was calculated to "please the ladies." This was achieved by decorating the wall panels, attenuated pilasters, entablatures and ceilings of his interiors with plaster bas-relief ornaments which, until about 1780, became more two-dimensional and tended to smallness of scale and "subenrichment of enrichments."[6] "The result was antiquity selected, rearranged, flattened, and made more decorative and more elegant by an eighteenth-century master."[7]

Typical motifs in Adam decoration were arabesque and grotesque decorated panels, combining such elements as flowing *rinceaux*, anthemia, urns, confronting griffins and sphinxes, putti and swags. Adam employed numerous elliptical, semi-circular, and circular forms in his plans: paterae, rosettes, medallions, cameos, semi-circular tympani and arched wall niches, lunette-shaped fanlights, semi-domes and octagonal caissons. Many of his ceilings were built up of ovoids and concentric circles (Fig. 48).

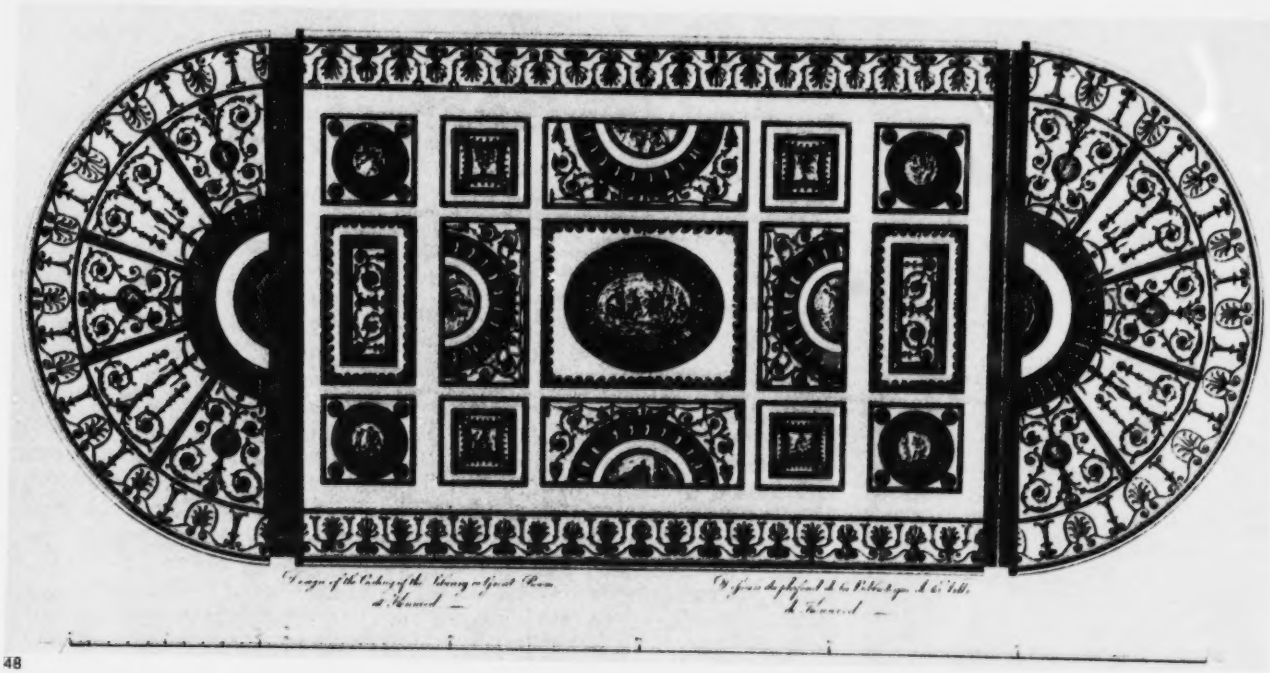
The richness and delicacy of Adam's decoration depended also on his use of colour.

It appears that Adam very early conceived of coloured grounds and white decoration, with judicious use of gilding; that his colours while sometimes pale were often full bodied and strong, that the colours were not limited to pastel tints generally thought of as "Adam;" that the most important place for colour in an early Adam room was the ceiling, but that by the mid-1760's his walls were equally colourful; and that he was not content with the mere "picking out of details with colour."[8]

The Adam style was extremely popular in England and Scotland up to the reign of George IV. Its influence percolated through English society until it was manifested in the embellishment of small houses and village shopfronts and the designs of silversmiths and makers of Sheffield plate.[9]

The Adam style was also influencial in Canada and the United States until the 1830s.[10] in the United States, Adam's ideas were spread by the brothers' two-volume *The Works in Architecture*, by architect Asher Benjamin's publication *The American Builder's Companion*, and by the work of such New England architects as Samuel MacIntyre and Charles Bulfinch. Adam motifs also appeared in the furniture designs of Thomas Shearer, George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sher-

48 Design of the ceiling of the library or great room at Kenwood, Robert Adam, architect, 1767. Many of the typical Adam motifs listed can be seen in this illustration. (*B. T. Batsford, The Decorative Work of Robert and James Adam, 1901.*)



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49 Grand staircase leading to the Wintergarden. Notice the original Loew lambrequins and the gas fixture.

aton. The Adam style was not transferred undiluted to America, but was modified and complicated in personal, imaginative versions developed by its adherents.[11]

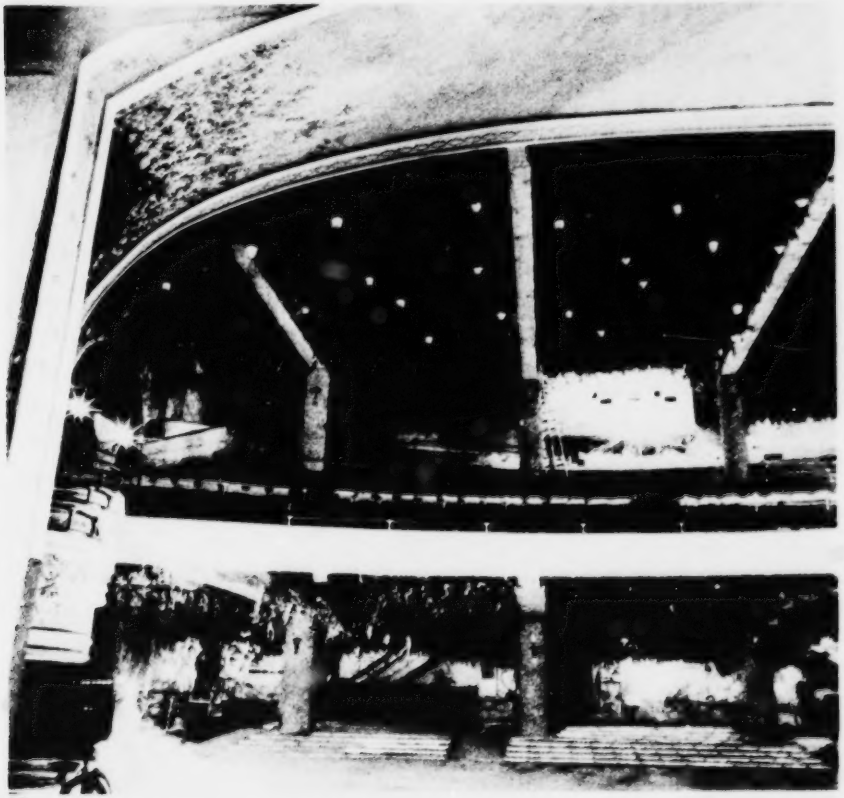
Though it declined by 1820 in the hands of the "New York School" into a profusion of "attenuated, overwrought ornament," the style again became popular in the United States and Canada in the so-called Beaux Arts period when artistic and architectural styles of all sorts were revived by artists and designers.[12]

Thomas Lamb no doubt encountered this revival when he was studying architecture at the Cooper Union in New York. Lamb, a countryman of Adam's, was born in Dundee in 1871 and emigrated to the United States in his youth. Following his Cooper Union training, he worked for a short time as a building inspector, and received his first theatre-designing assignment from William Fox in 1909.[13]

Fox's City Theatre, 14th Street, New York, was unlike the theatres which later made Lamb famous. It was a small theatre, built according to the prevailing "high class" ideas, with two balconies. It mainly housed stage shows, though Lamb was requested to allow space for a projection booth.[14]

49

50 View from the Wintergarden stage. The auditorium's entrance doors are in the right sidewall and are not visible. The stairway at the rear leads to the mezzanine and balcony. The ceiling and the undersides of the projection booth and balcony are hung with artificial wisteria blossoms, real and artificial leaves, and "garden lanterns."



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Between 1913 and 1919 Lamb's reputation as a first-class movie palace architect was firmly established. His Regent and Mark Strand theatres, New York's first deluxe movie house and first movie palace, have already been discussed. His next notable achievements were the daringly stageless Rialto and Rivoli theatres in New York, both impressively designed in Adam style. His *tour de force* was New York's Capitol theatre, of unprecedented size and magnificence. Its style was Adam and Empire; it seated 5,300 and it was the largest theatre in the world at that time.

All these theatres came to be managed by S. L. "Roxy" Rothafel, who ensured that the entertainment presented matched the decor and scale of the buildings which housed them. Thus the combination of Lamb and Roxy was pretty much directly responsible for the movie palace phenomenon.

Lamb explained that he had adapted Adam designs to his movie palace interiors because he "felt that this style of decoration most ably reflected the moods and preferences of the American people."[15] Probably, the style was suited to Lamb's purposes as it was both grand and familiar; it was a "living room" style that conveyed the desired impression of elegance and costliness without being intimidating and forbidding. As well, Adam embellishments, in low relief, were relatively simple and inexpensive to reproduce in cast plaster, compared to more involuted decorative styles.

Lamb must have felt that the moods and preferences of the Canadian people were decidedly similar. The decoration of his first Canadian theatre, Loew's Yonge Street, opened in December 1913, was a somewhat heavy example of Adam revival. The theatre was chiefly intended for vaudeville. But Lamb departed from his Adam predilections in his decoration of Loew's Wintergarden, a vaudeville theatre built on top of Loew's Yonge Street theatre.[16] As it is the exception to most generalizations that can be made about Lamb theatres up to 1920, the Wintergarden is discussed in detail.

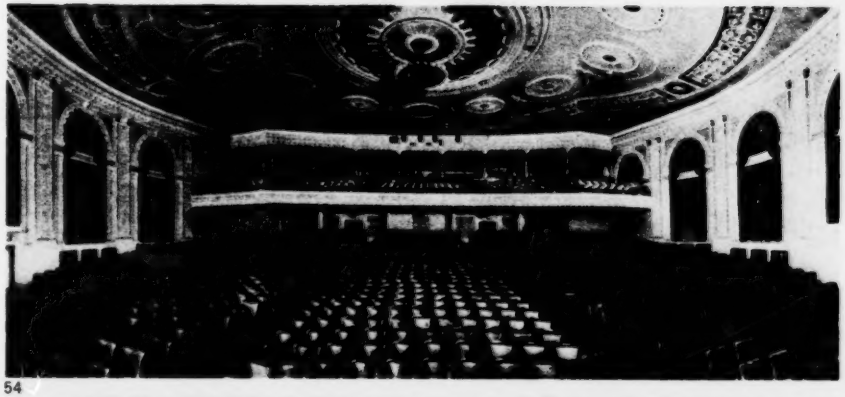
To reach the Wintergarden, the patron took one of three elevators from the foyer of the downstairs theatre, or ascended seven flights of stairs whose scagliola banister was swarming with chubby putti interspersed

54, 55, 56, 57 Four similar Lamb auditoriums. *54*, Capitol theatre, Calgary. Photo taken about 1924. *55*, Capitol theatre, Vancouver, September 1930. *56*, Capitol theatre, Winnipeg, May 1949. *57*, Capitol theatre, Windsor, October 1930. (*Famous Players Limited*.)

with hefty *rinçeaux* and rosettes (Fig. 49). The elevators and stairs terminated in a small foyer, decorated only with a neoclassical plaster cornice and a plate reading "Strike your Matches Here."

The recognizable Lamb features in the theatre's interior are the well-designed sight lines and single curving balcony, and the balanced proporions of the sidewall boxes and the proscenium arch. Instead of Lamb's usual plaster decorations, leafy branches of real trees, dipped in fireproofing solution, were woven on lattices in the upper boxes and on wires strung just underneath the sidewall arches, the ceiling and the undersides of the balcony and the projection booth which, unlike his later designs, physically projects into the auditorium. Some artificial leaves and flowers are also suspended in these areas and the surfaces are a mass of foliage (Fig. 50). The supporting pillars of the balcony, ceiling and upper boxes, and the "columns" flanking the exit doors, the proscenium arch and sidewall arches are decorated in plaster to resemble tree trunks. In all the "engaged tree trunks" the plasterwork is extended into plaster branches until they diminish into two-dimensional painted branches and leaves. A full moon projects slightly from behind the painted leaves on one side of the sounding board.

The rest of the theatre's decoration is painted. Trellises of climbing roses,



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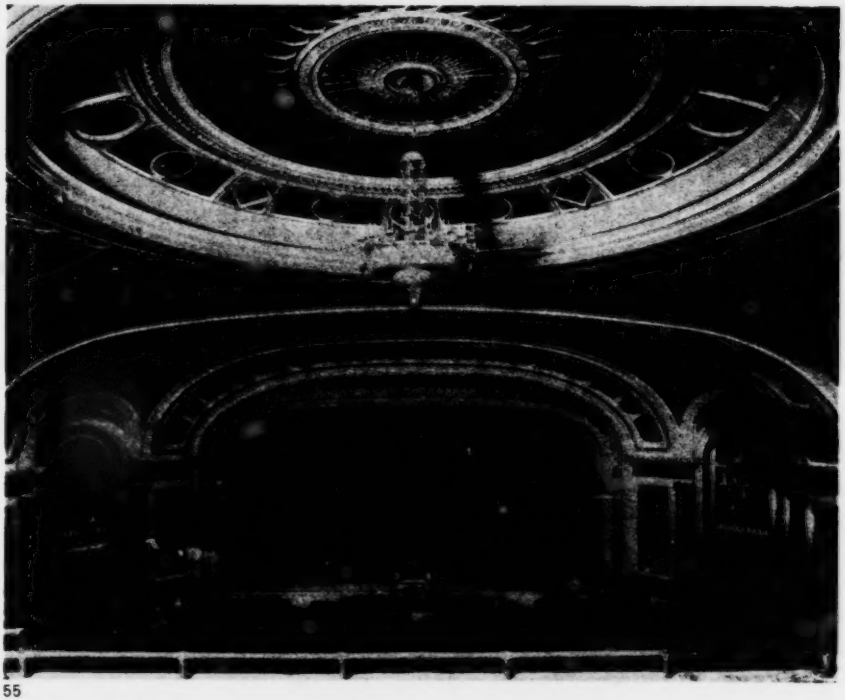

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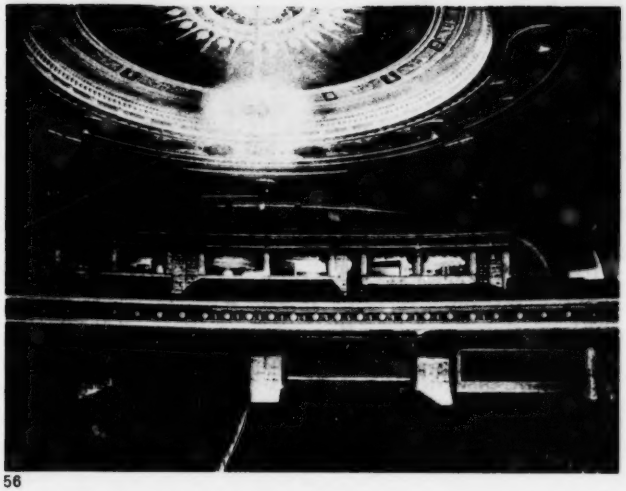

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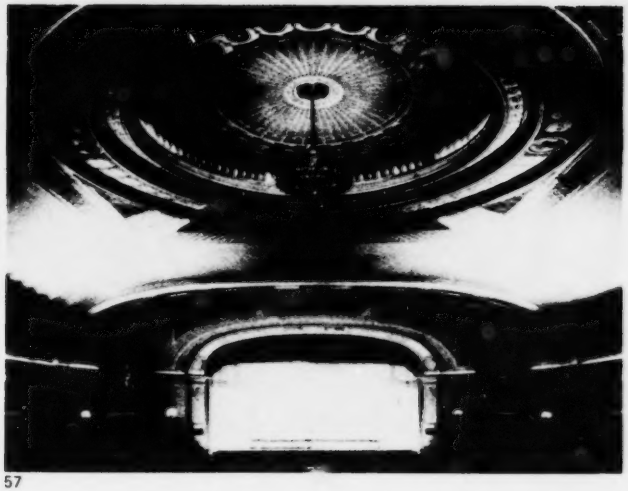

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cleverly painted to give a three-dimensional impression, abound in the sidewall arches, surround the proscenium and decorate the balcony and box fronts. The trellis effect is taken up in the design of the organ grills. A peculiar mountainous landscape rises unexpectedly from the trellis above the proscenium arch (Figs. 51-52). The remaining walls of the theatre (the rear wall of the auditorium and the hallways and stairs between the balcony and orchestra and behind the boxes) were painted to resemble a walled garden, teeming with creeping and flowering plants, small exotic trees, birds and woodland animals (Fig. 53).

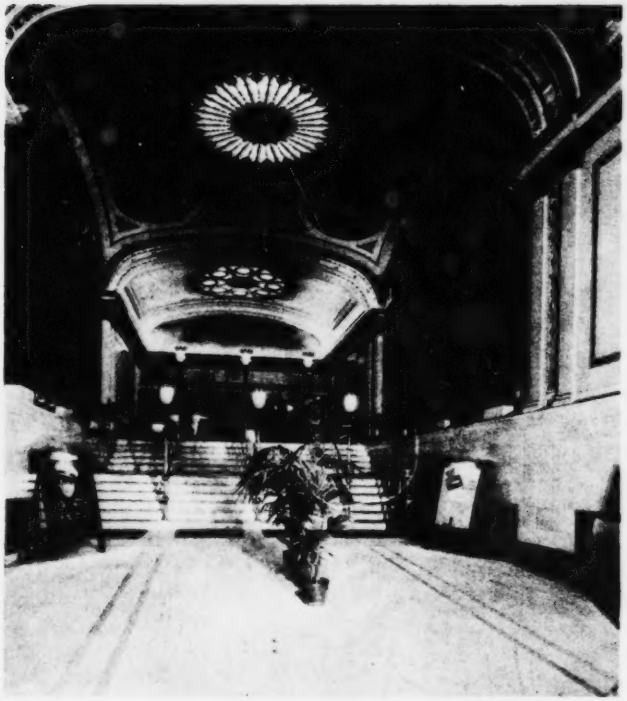
Thomas Lamb may not have designed another theatre like the Wintergarden, a presumption which is difficult to verify because of the number of theatres he designed. Almost certainly it is unique in Canada. It presaged the "atmospheric" movie palace interiors (which were designed ten years later by John Eberson, and later still by Lamb), whose domes were decorated to give the impression of a tropical sky complete with stars and clouds.

None of Lamb's ensuing Canadian movie palaces differed radically from the others (Figs. 54-57), and it is possible that one of his Canadian theatres may have had an identical twin in the United States or elsewhere. He built a trio of American palaces for the Loew chain between 1929 and 1932 in which "the same castings for ornamental plaster work, the same sets of detailed drawings, identical carpeting and light fixtures – even the same elephants on the newel posts were used."[17]

Cameos, medallions and arabesque panels were perhaps the most frequent elements in the decorative schemes of his Canadian theatres. In their auditoriums, the predominant colour scheme was old rose, gold, ivory and grey.[18] As well, in contemporary descriptions of Lamb's new houses, such phrases as "Sienna marble," "wall mirrors," "brocade panels" and "crystal electroliers" tend to recur. Several identical motifs could be found in more than one theatre. For example, a cast plaster circular panel depicting dancing putti could be seen in Loew's theatre in Montreal and Ottawa's Capitol. Replicas of the "sunburst" chandelier in the auditorium of the Ottawa Capitol hung in the Capitol theatres in Calgary, Winnipeg, and Windsor (Fig. 58).

Nevertheless, Lamb's stock Adam ornament appeared in new combinations and, to some extent, certain theatres would seem to have called for unstandardized architectural solutions (Figs. 59-61). For example the Temple in Brantford, opened in December 1919, held 1,700 patrons on one floor.

59, 60 Variations on a theme in lobby decoration. *59*, Loew's Montreal, built in 1917. (*Famous Players Limited, 1930.*) *60*, Capitol theatre, Vancouver (*Famous Players Limited, 1930.*)



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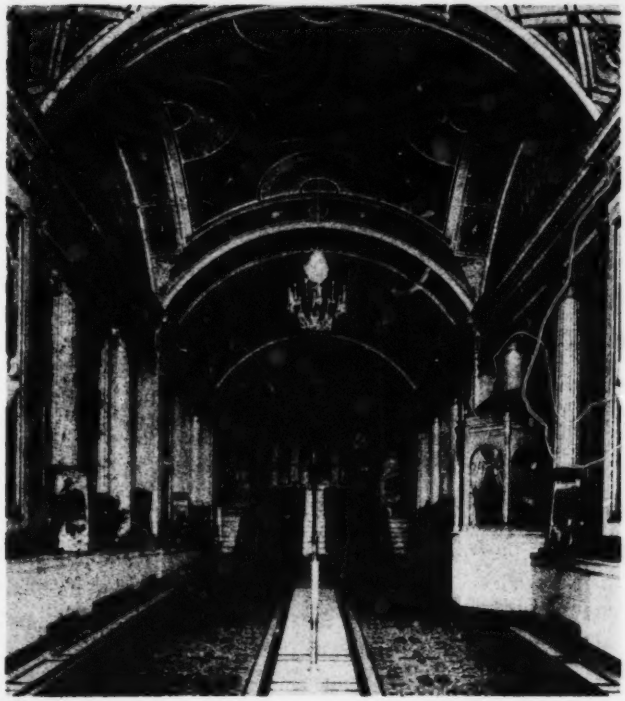

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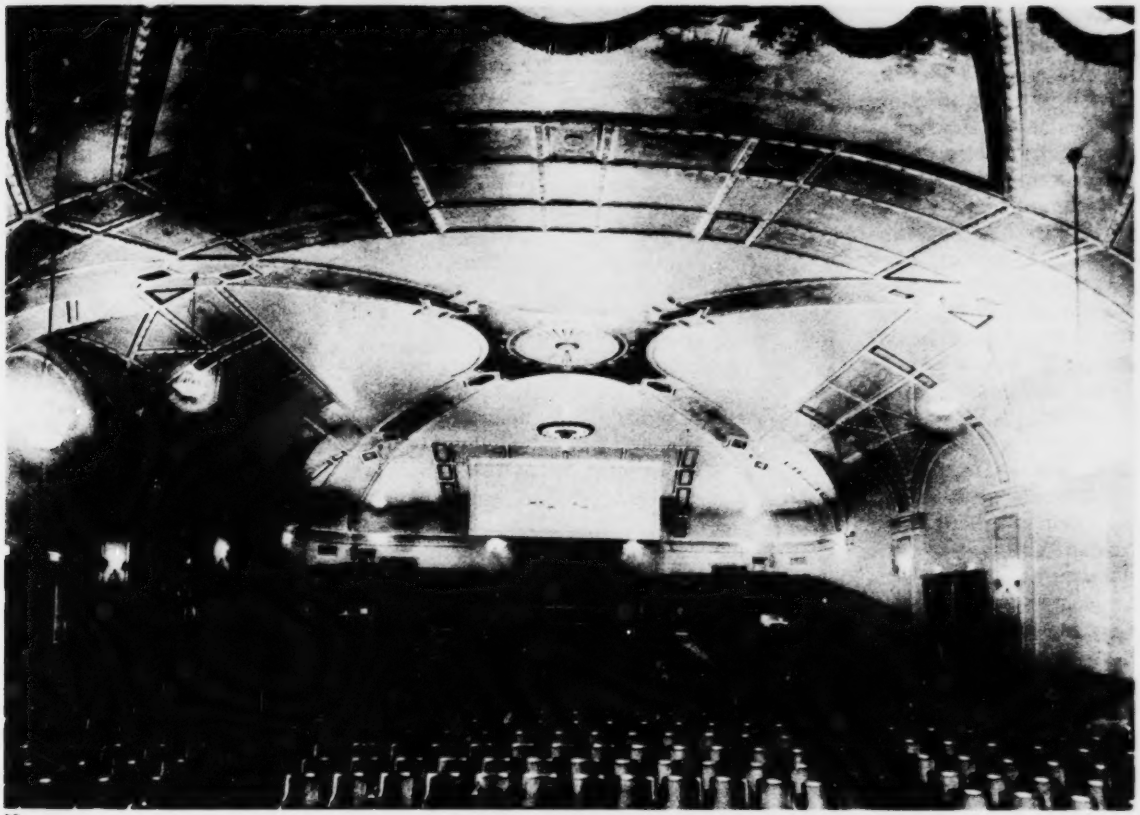
Another, the Imperial in Toronto, by contrast was the "largest theatre in the empire" (Figs. 62-64). Certain features appeared in only one of Lamb's Canadian theatres. The Ottawa Capitol's grand foyer had no known equal, nor did the Montreal Capitol's great elliptical coffered dome in the auditorium (Fig. 65).

Lamb trusted that the decoration of his theatres was "really educational for those interested in...[architecture], in decorative painting, modeling, etc." It was thus "essential for the architect to follow a style to its most minute detail if he [wished] to avoid the lash of criticism."[19] Most of Lamb's theatres in Canada are thus reasonably good examples of Adam revival in decoration as he handled Adam motifs faithfully and with a good sense of balance.

But Lamb and those who followed his pedagogical approach sometimes stimulated the strictures he sought to escape.

"This irresponsible reproduction of all the great architectural treasures of the ages," wrote one horrified savant, "so cheapens public taste that one wonders if a whole generation is not now arising whose artistic appreciation will be so warped that in years to come, Americans visiting the great sites of antiquity will be heard to remark: 'So this is the Taj Mahal; pshaw...the Oriental theatre at home is twice as big and has electric lights besides.'"[20]

62, 63, 64 Lamb auditoriums. The Temple, later the Capitol (*62*) in Brantford, contrasted with another Lamb theatre without a balcony and of similar capacity, Loew's, later the Capitol, in London, Ont. (*63*). These bear little resemblance to Toronto's Pantages theatre, later the Imperial (*64*), whose capacity was over 3,000. (Figs. 62 and 64 photographed about 1924; Fig. 63 taken in 1930.) (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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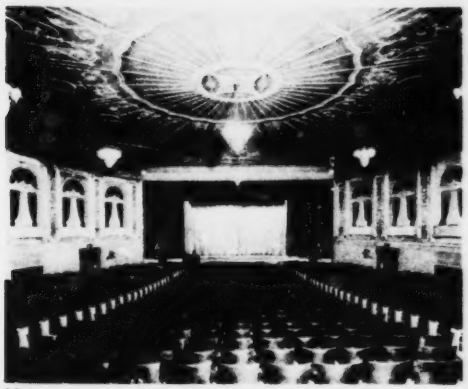

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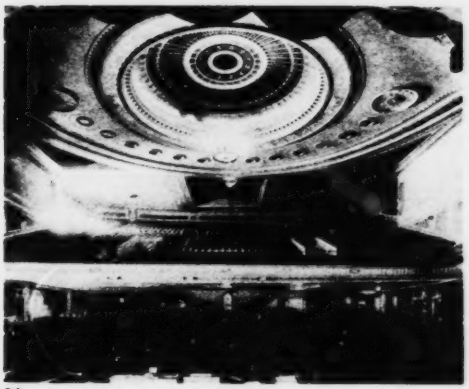

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Building a Movie Palace: The Capitol

A movie palace was an extremely complex structure to design and build. To be successful it usually required the collaboration of an architect, a structural engineer, and electrical engineer, a heating and ventilating expert, an acoustics consultant and an interior decorator.[1] It was these experts' job to produce a building that was comfortable and well ventilated, had exemplary sight lines and acoustics, with enough circulation space and exits for thousands of patrons, and the appearance of being unstintingly luxurious. Yet, in most cases, a movie palace had to be built and opened in the shortest possible time so that its owners could begin to recoup their investment.

Some of the grandest movie palaces took between one and two years to build, equip and decorate. Usually, their opening dates were predicted months ahead of their actual openings. *It is not... [an overstatement] to describe cinema building operations as an unceasing headlong rush from the time the boarding surrounds the vacant site to the moment when the last painter and chair-fixer are being "shushed" out of the back door whilst the mayor and corporation are crossing the red carpet...to the front door to the opening ceremony.*[2]

At Loew's (Ottawa) opening, representatives from Government House and City Council encountered a lobby hung with Canadian flags, bought at the last minute to disguise unfinished plasterwork.[3]

The Ottawa *Citizen* announced on 24 July 1919 that Bate McMahon Company would begin to construct the following week a Loew's theatre on the corner of Bank and Queen streets.[4] Its cost was estimated at $500,000 and the theatre's opening was predicted for the following January.

To make way for a building that extended 99 feet along Bank Street and 264 feet along Queen, a number of one-storey brick and brick veneer offices and commercial establishments (all except one fronting on Bank Street), a livery stable and a few iron sheds were demolished. A considerable portion of the lot was empty on Queen Street. In their place rose a four-storey movie palace of brick over a steel frame or "composite construction" (Figs. 66-67).

Steel frame construction, though relatively expensive and new, had many advantages. It allowed a greater speed of erection than reinforced concrete *in situ* construction or the building of load-carrying brick walls of statutory thickness. It produced an initially drier building which could be plastered and painted sooner than a reinforced concrete structure. "In auditorium construction the cavities resulting after stanchion casing between the outer wall and the inner flush skin [could] be used for upcast ducts in connection with the ventilating system."[5] As well, "in being able to span reasonable distances, steel frame construction offered an easy solution to the problem of creating stage areas and proscenium openings." Finally, it produced more floor space than buildings with thick load-carrying brick walls.[6]

The outer and inner brick walls of the theatre were constructed simultaneously. The space developed between them, the cavity wall, accommodated the ties which joined the two structures and provided insulation. Air space and cinders between the poured concrete floor (at ground level) and the interior hardwood flooring afforded additional insulation.

The movie palace architect and engineer were faced with the problem of constructing balconies that seated more than a thousand, projected 50 to 100 feet, rose at an angle of 20 to 30 degrees, spanned wide spaces, had a depth of two or even three storeys, yet were free from severe vibration when the theatre was being filled and emptied.[7] Great cantilevered balconies were the solution ; in addition, they obviated the need for view-obstructing columns in the auditorium. "Immense loads could be transferred to the wall stanchions using a minimum of material" through a criss-cross-cantilevered system of steel structural members and girders.[8]

A greatly simplified explanation follows of the construction method employed for the 1,077-seat balcony of the Capitol and the rest of the movie palaces :

Usually, such a balcony is fed at two or more levels through its thickness in the manner of the seats of an amphitheatre, and the large spaces left are utilized as retiring rooms, smoking rooms, and lounges generally....These great balconies are only partially built on the cantilever principle. A great lattice girder 10 or 12 feet deep is first placed at the nearest

66, 67 Loew's (Ottawa) theatre under construction in 1919. The gentleman with the moustache and spats in Figure 67 resembles Thomas Lamb. (*Photographs courtesy of Miss Helen Ewart.*)

66

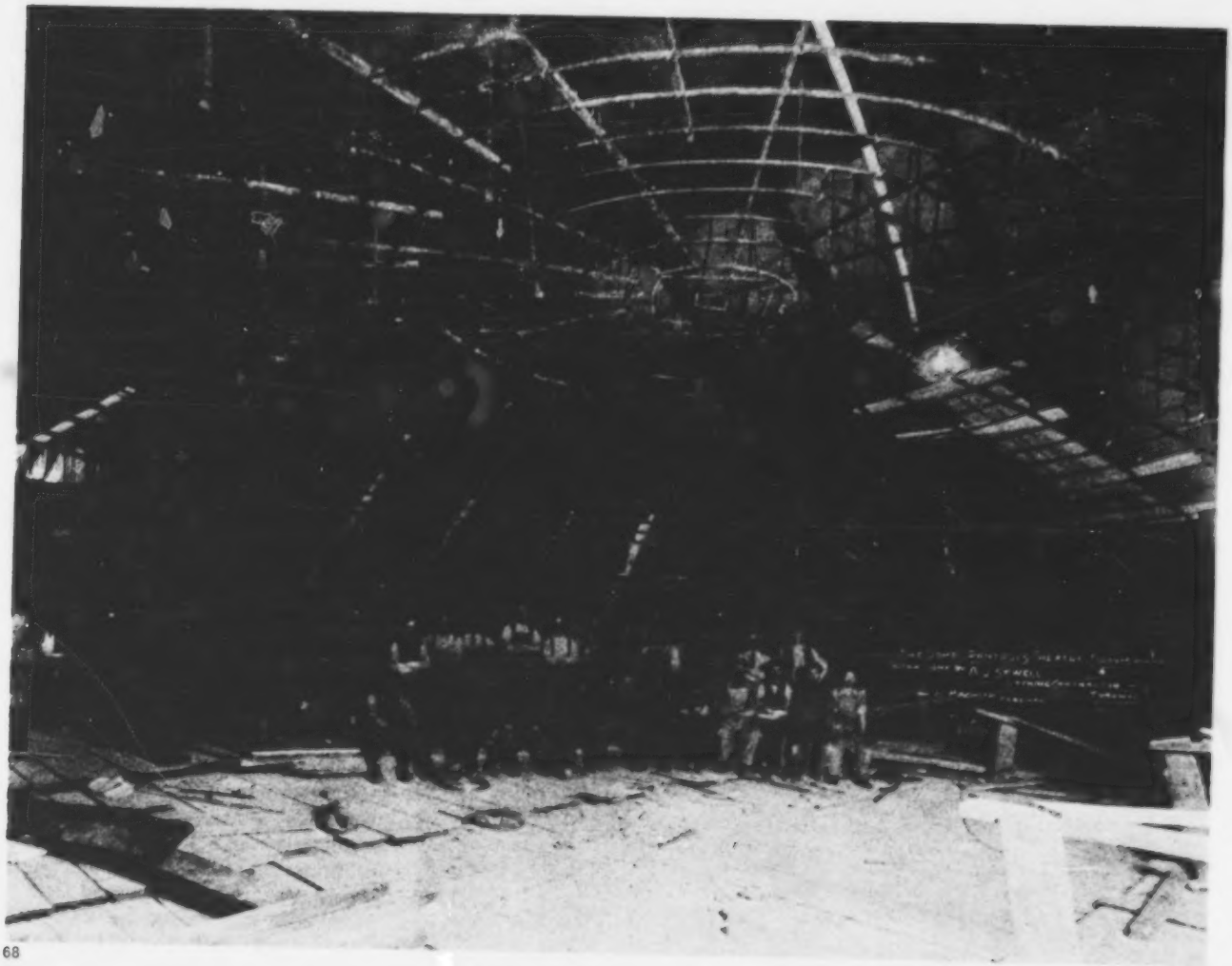
67

point to the front of the balcony which will provide sufficient depth. The cross beams are then placed running as cantilevers to the front edge. Through the spaces of this great lattice girder the tunnels feeding the seats have sufficient headroom to pass.[9]

It was not the case, as one observer complained, that the movie palace dome, "a feature that needs a maximum of support," was "gaily dragged in and suspended from heaven by goodness knows what means."[10] The flat roof of the theatre, comprising fabricated steel trusses supporting steel I-beams, joists and boards, and a coat of tar and gravel, supported the metal lath and plaster-suspended domes of the Capitol's grand foyer and auditorium. Angle irons were knitted into the metal lath network, which was shaped into a dome and suspended from the steel decking of the roof by a myriad of steel hangers or trusses.

The metal lath network provided an ideal key for a minimum quantity of fibrous plaster which was applied from the under side of the dome. The plaster was smoothed and shaped on application with hand-held wooden or metal "running moulds," whose templates were cut to resemble a reversed cross section of the form they reproduced. The plaster dome might be "run" as many as ten times, and between each application, the plaster was allowed to set. Finally, 1/32 inch of plaster of paris, or the "white coat" was skimmed over the fibrous plaster.

68, 69 The dome of Pantages theatre (Toronto) under construction in 1920. *68*, The framework for the metal lath and the steel hangers are clearly visible. *69*, After plastering – the hole in the centre accommodated the cable of the chandelier, which was attached to a winch whose platform was supported by the steel of the roof. The gaps in the plasterwork at the top of the photograph served as the "air return." (*Micklethwaite photos.*)



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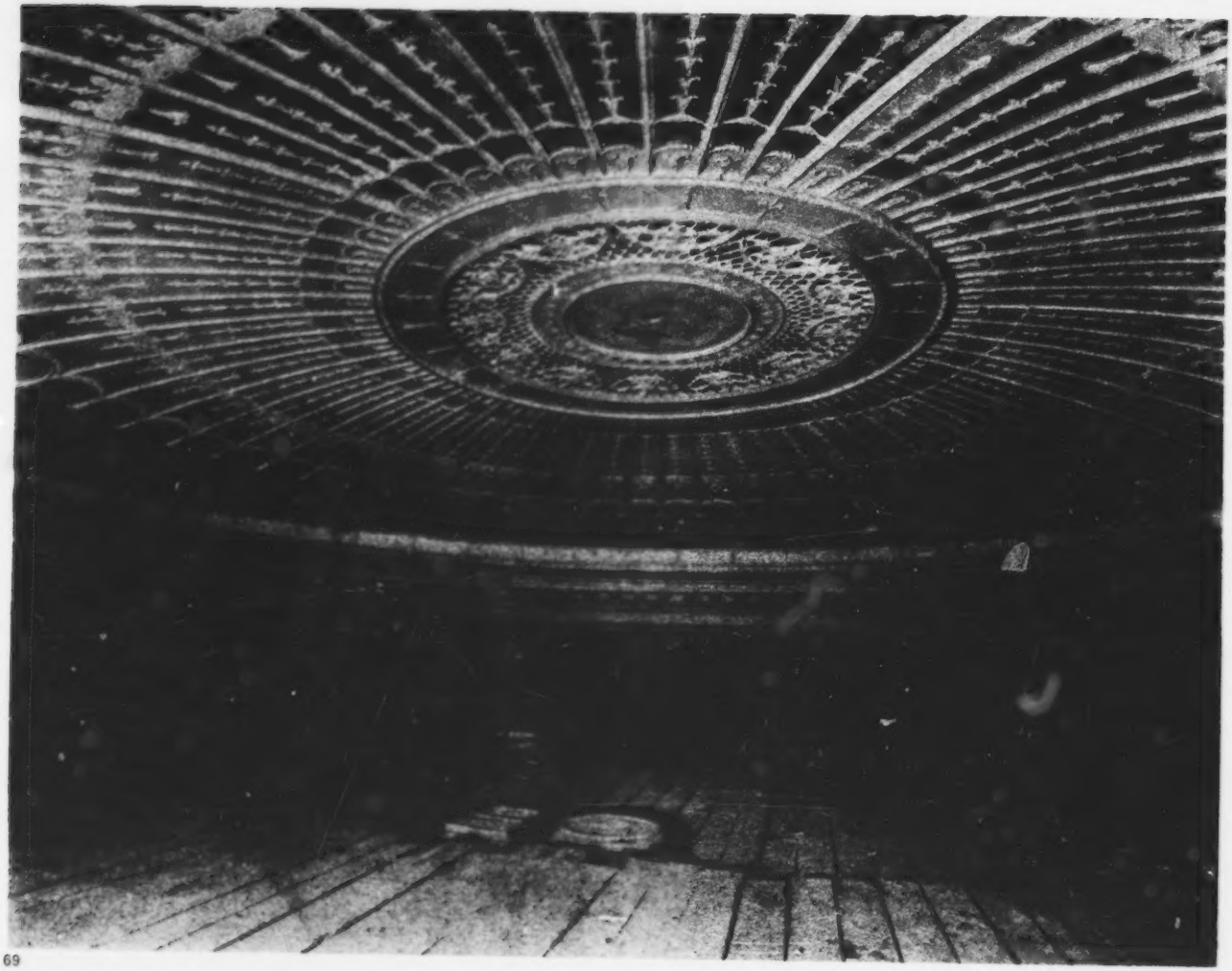

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70, 71, 72 Details of roof and dome construction in the Ottawa Capitol. The area between the rim of the dome and the roof accommodated catwalks and ventilating ducts. In Figure 65 (Montreal Capitol dome), a board covers an area damaged when someone missed his footing on the catwalk. The victim was rescued, and did not end up among the balcony seats.

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The basic form of the dome was defined in this way. Cast plaster enrichments were applied later, or, if they were heavy, were attached directly to the metal lath with fibres and plaster (Figs. 68-69).[11]

This dome construction was common in movie palaces and was structurally sound. The dome would not be jeopardized by the breaking of one or several of the steel hangers. But the dome could be damaged by the impact of a body falling off the catwalk that usually encircled the dome under the roof. It is possible that such a body might fall right through the dome, but its metal lath probably did not very easily rupture, and no instance was discovered of someone taking that route into the auditorium or grand foyer (Figs. 70-72).

After the roof and the shell of the building were fairly well completed, it was the job of the ornamental plasterers, painters, decorators and other subcontractors to make the structure into a movie palace under the architect's guidance (Figs. 73-74).

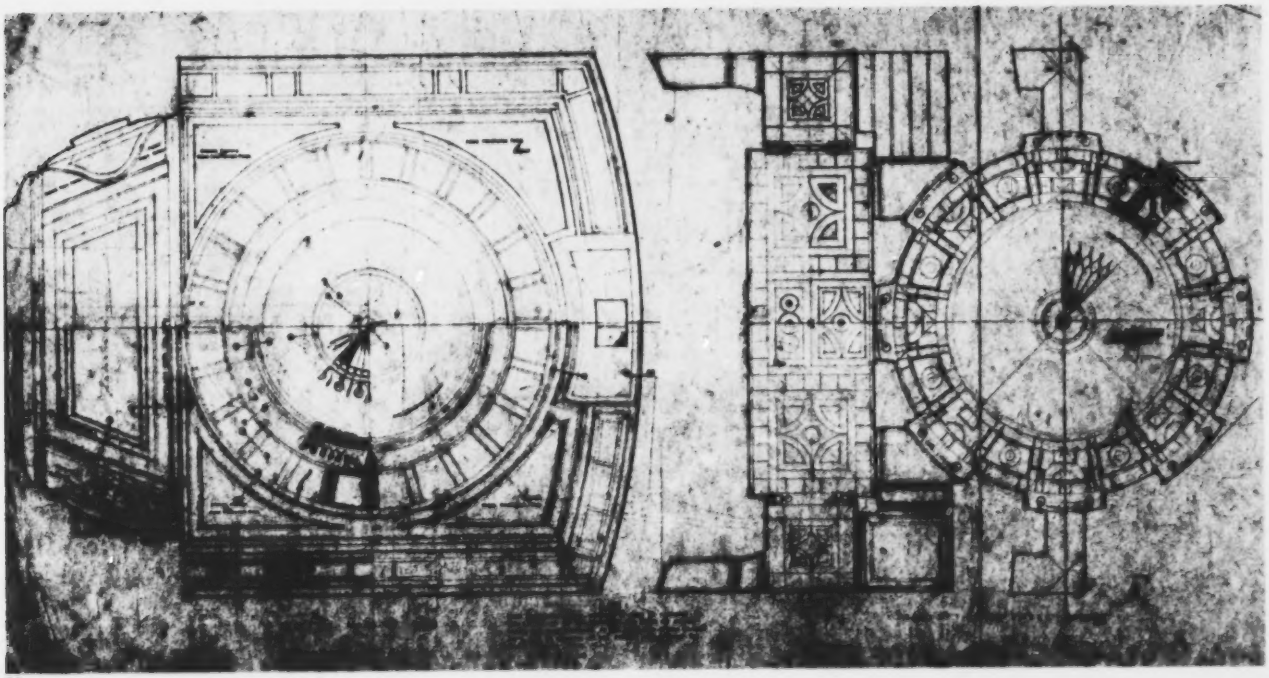
Miss Ann Dornin of Thomas Lamb's office in New York supervised the work of G. T. Green Ltd., the local firm responsible for exterior and interior painting, the ornamental plastering firm of Peter B. Baxter of Montreal, and William Eckhardt of New York, who was responsible for the decorative paintings and murals. Mr. J. A. Ewart was the local supervising architect.

It does not appear that "interior decorations were sent up boxed from the United States, each piece numbered, to be erected according to instructions."[12] The duty and shipping costs involved in such a system would have been prohibitive. As well, it was Lamb's custom to employ local craftsmen and materials when available.[13] He maintained an office in Toronto where the plans for his Canadian theatres were drawn up.

The blueprints for Loew's Ottawa theatre, which included specifications for the plaster decoration required, were submitted to Baxter's plastering firm. Novel designs were modelled in clay to specifications and plaster casts produced. The firm no doubt maintained plaster moulds of most of the fairly commonplace mouldings and motifs employed.[14] From these flexible gelatine moulds were made[15] from which numerous castings would be duplicated. Gelatine moulds were best suited to work requiring much repetition without excessive cost. They also reproduced undercut relief modelling, and, perhaps best of all, could be melted down and remoulded.[16] Cast plaster panels were obviously delivered to Toronto's Pantages theatre (*see* Fig. 69), and it is possible that Baxter's firm may have shipped tons of breakable ornamentation from Montreal. But often a plastering firm working out of town set up a small shop on the site or rented one a short distance away.

Fairly small ornaments were cast in fibrous or solid plaster in one piece. Sometimes they were additionally backed with cheesecloth, burlap or some other reinforcement. They were fastened to a plastered wall or ceiling with moist plaster, which was blended with a small wet brush. Running ornaments and mouldings were cast in

74 Two of the architect's plans with instructions on decoration. *73*, Plan of auditorium and grand foyer ceilings. *74*, Cross-section, grand foyer, auditorium and stage. (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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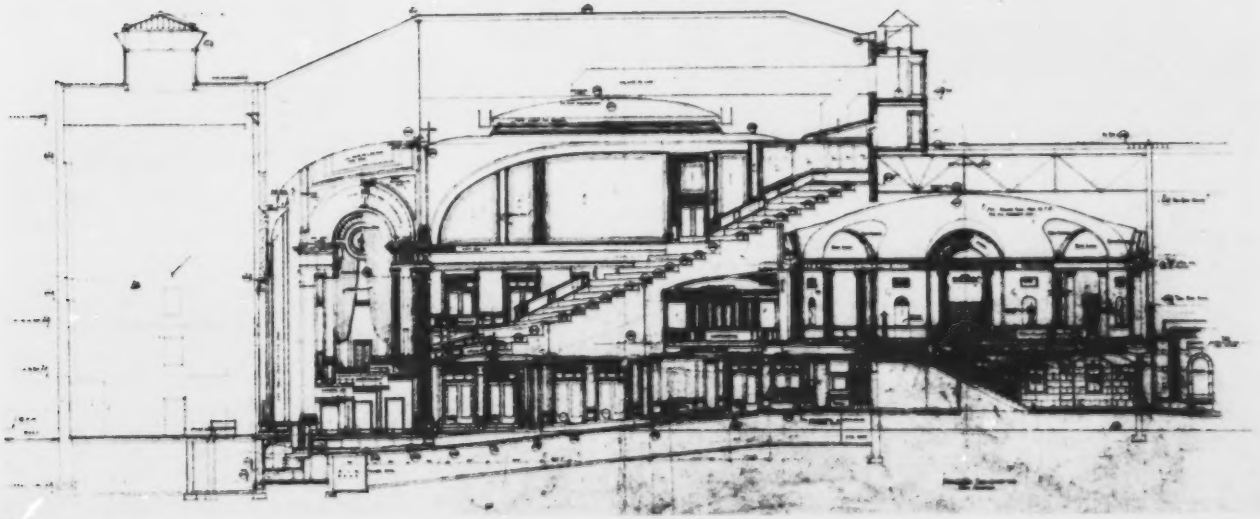

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75, 76 Examples of the Capitol's low relief plaster decoration – running ornament cast in identical sections, and individual ornament cast in one piece. *75*, Decoration around the rim of the auditorium dome. *76*, Adam arabesques and plaster medallion over the doorways in the grand foyer mezzanine.

75

sections, perhaps two or three feet long, and fixed in the same way. Breaks and joints between the castings were smoothed (or "jointed") with plaster. Large sections of ornament were cast in fibrous plaster as this material, reinforced with hemp fibre, was light (less than one quarter the weight of solid plaster), tough and quickly dried. These large sections were nailed or screwed in place, or affixed with fibre and plaster (Figs. 75-76).[17]

Cornices were cast in fibrous plaster as hollow shells and reinforced with pencil rods, or were run "on the bench" (not *in situ*). The template of the running mould was cut to leave beds in which mouldings and enrichments, cast in sections, were embedded.

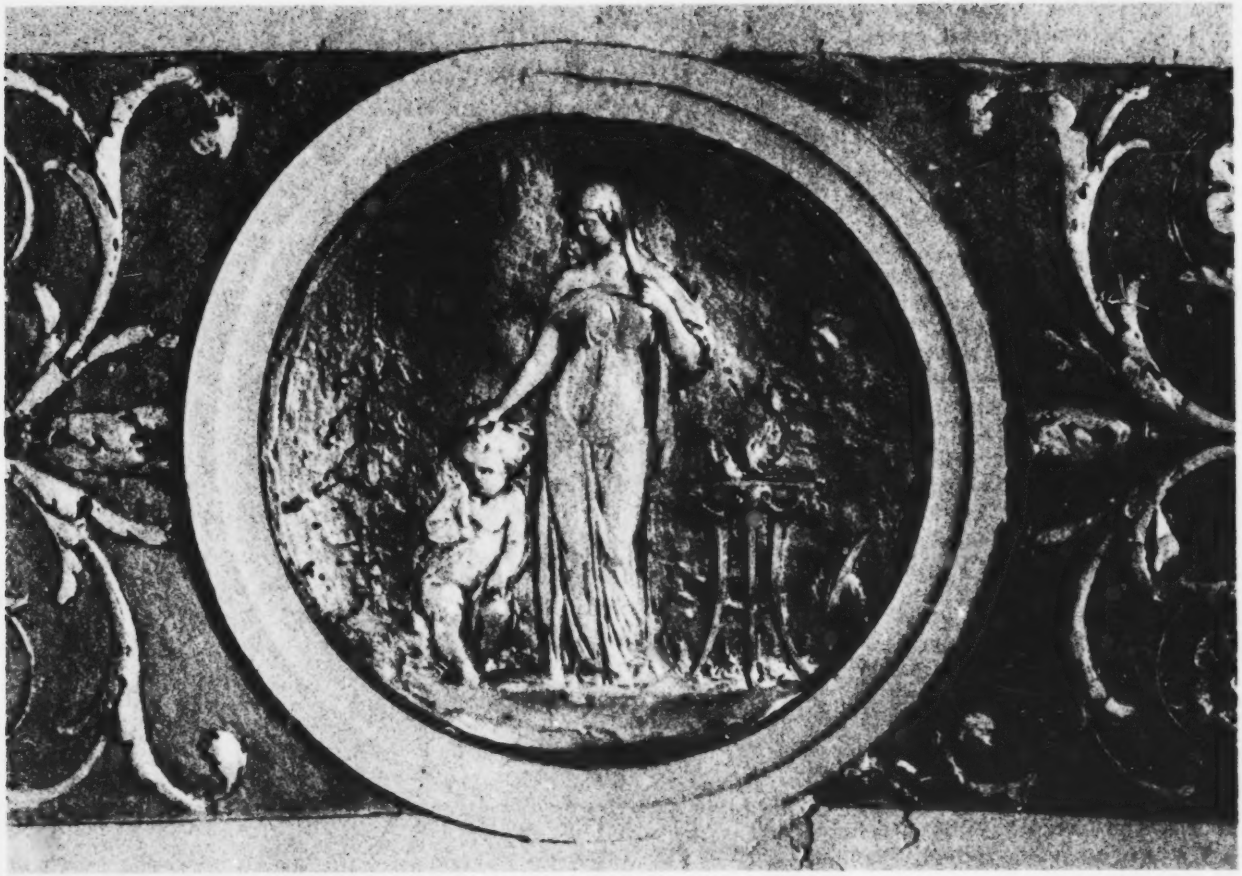
Large free-standing features were produced in piece moulds and were fitted and stuck together. Certain of these features were left hollow if they had no supporting function. But each baluster which, like a plain column, was cast from two identical moulds, was filled with plaster and was supported by a steel rod in the centre. Supporting columns probably had a core of masonry, structural steel, wire lath and plaster mixed with coarser mortar, and were "cased" with two vertical plaster casts.[18]

Plaster ornament was the cheapest expensive-looking decoration available.[19] Plaster was also used as a cheap substitute for marble. The columns in the auditorium, lobby and grand foyer, and the balustrade of the main staircase were scagliola, a rock-hard plaster composition which closely resembled marble (Fig. 77).

Mr. Fred Balmer, whose plastering firm decorated Loew's Uptown in Toronto, described the production of a scagliola column. It required considerable expertise. A two-foot strip of stretched oilcloth large enough to go around the plaster column was laid down, and veining colour applied by swirling on the surface a bunch of silk threads knotted at one end and dipped in pigments of suitable marble colour like sienna. On top of this, Keen's cement, a very fine plaster fortified with cement, was gently applied until it was a quarter of an inch thick. The ensemble was then wrapped around the column, and the oilcloth removed at a safe time. When the whole column had been treated and was dry, it was rubbed down with a pumice stone, followed by another fine stone, and then polished and oiled to give it a gleaming marble-like appearance.[20]

The steps of the main stair case were marble. They were reportedly shipped to the site numbered in order.[21] Other areas subject to excessive wear and tear, like floor trim, wall bases and radiator covers, were faced with marble.

The final movie palace touches were made with paint. Two-dimensional designs and specifications for the colours used throughout the theatre were laid down by William Eckhard's firm, which was wholly responsible for the free-hand art work. G. T.



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Green's firm did the rest of the painting, including any stencilling that decorated the theatre in 1920. Mr. Green does not think that much stencilling was done in the theatre at that time, but conceded that in the 1920s stencilling was a popular method of decorating large public buildings and even private homes.[22] The earliest photographs available of the theatre's interior reveal that many of its wall areas were stencilled. Stencilling, like plaster ornament, was inexpensive. The stencil work seen in the Ottawa Capitol was relatively uncomplicated as it invoived only two colours (Fig. 78).

Plasterwork was not painted in the same way as woodwork. G. T. Green was instructed to apply three coats of white lead mixed with linseed oil, turpentine and japan drier to

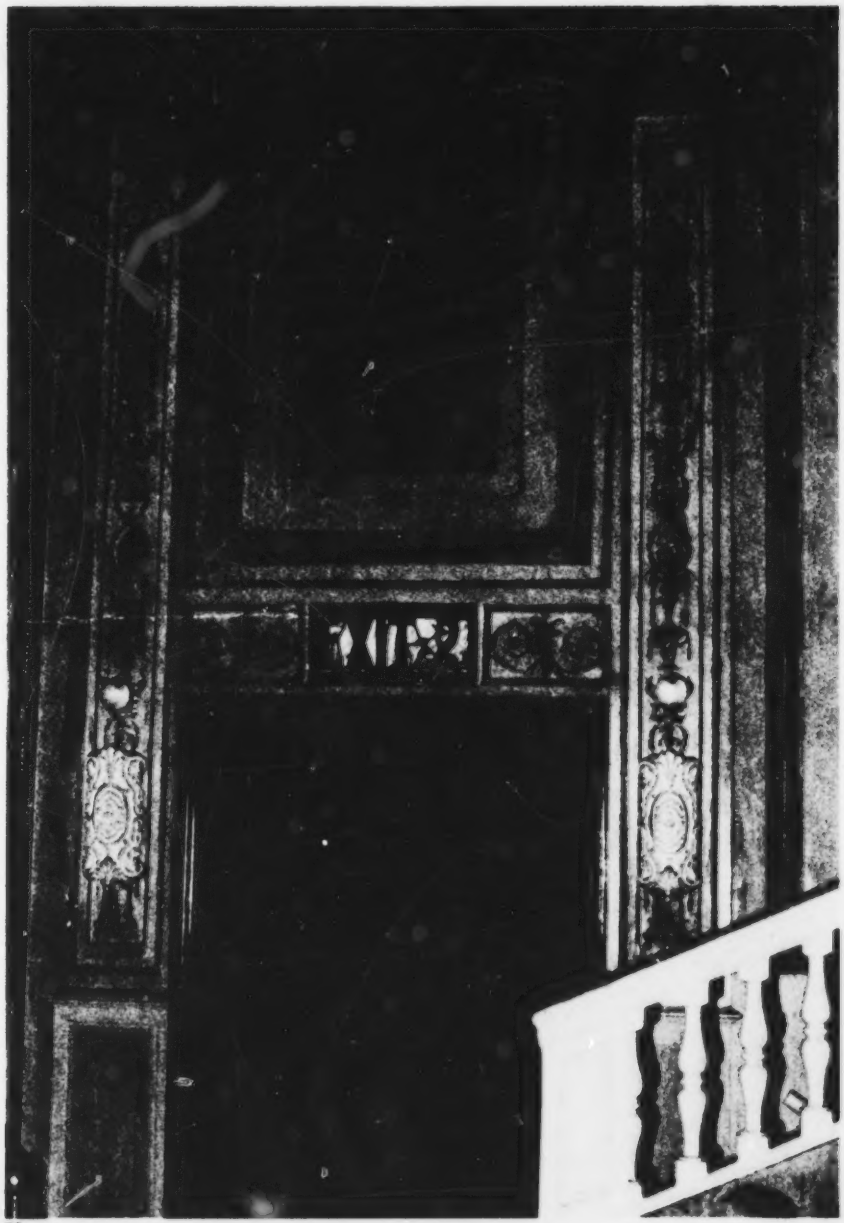
78 A stencilled wall panel in the Capitol's auditorium, 1970.

"green" and even wet plaster. This step was to be followed by an application of ground colours and raw linseed oil. (Usually plasterwork had to be aged and its suction allayed before it was painted. It could be aged artifically by applying a solution of zinc sulphate.[23]) The procedure employed in the Capitol was completely new to Mr. Green and seemed reckless. He was told that it was followed in all American movie palaces. He waited in vain for the plaster to fall off.

The Capitol and other movie palaces looked much more expensive than they really were. Most of them in Canada cost less than $1 million, often including the cost of the site. The building type could be characterized as "architecture of illusion," and it was thoroughly appropriate that illusionistic edifices were built for motion pictures.

The method and spirit of movie palace architecture were very close to those of the movies themselves. Poplars and palanquins, palm trees and pergolas were imitated in lath and plaster as they would be on a film set.[24]

Many of the Capitol's former patrons would be surprised to learn that they had once gasped at wire lath and plaster domes, and wooden and scagliola columns and balustrades.



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The Capitol: Equipment and Decoration

In design, the Capitol basically conformed with all movie palace requirements: the provision of luxury, comfort and lavish entertainment for a large number of patrons. Thus, before renovations, there were 2,580 air-cushioned, upholstered seats in the orchestra, balcony and boxes.[1] Further accommodations for the theatre's patrons included a large lobby in which queues could form, an impressive grand foyer, and spacious waiting areas and rest rooms in keeping with the rest of the decor. Numerous vomitories ("an opening, door, or passage in a theatre, playhouse or the like, affording ingress or egress to the spectators" – OED) contributed to the patrons' convenience and safety (Figs. 79-80). Aside from staff offices and storage areas, the rest of the theatre proper was devoted to producing a temperate climate in the building and to the entertainment presented.

In 1920, the basements at the front and rear of the building contained steam boilers, circulating pumps, intake fans and their motors, and other heating and ventilating equipment. In the roof were exhaust fans and motors. Under the floors, behind the walls and in the attic was a maze of ventilating ducts terminating in intake and extract grilles. A *Citizen* writer explained how the ventilating system worked in 1920.

With a gigantic blower system at the right and left floor lines to assure fresh air intake at all times, and a frequent distribution of exhaust fans at the ceiling line to suck out the used and impure air, Loew's should be unusually well ventilated. Warm air is fed to the auditorium by means of ducts under each seat and in the summer these will be used to feed cool air into the theatre.[2]

In the summer, the air was cooled by passing through a fine water curtain in front of the intake fans.[3]

Newspaper articles on newly constructed movie palaces frequently stressed the excellence of their ventilating and heating systems. This could not yet be taken for granted, as patrons could remember that old-fashioned movie theatres were usually stifling. Although a system such as the one described was a great improvement, it was far from perfect. Exhaust fumes from automobiles and street dust were also sucked in at ground level. Some of the impurities were screened out by the "air washer," but this device was expensive to operate and required frequent maintenance. Moreover the air that had passed through the water curtain cooled off the theatre's patrons basically by making them damp. Another drawback of the system was that, during the winter, the warm air pumped in at ground level quickly rose, leaving behind most of the dense, impure air at the audience's level, often creating drafts.[4]

The Monsoon system of theatre ventilation, which apparently became popular in about 1920-21, took care of some of these problems. Air was instead forced down into the theatre from ceiling level by mechanical means, and was exhausted at ground level. Thus, "a blanket of fresh air" was spread over the audience, heated air was not wasted, and the foul air in the auditorium was removed near its source and remained in the theatre for the least possible length of time.[5]

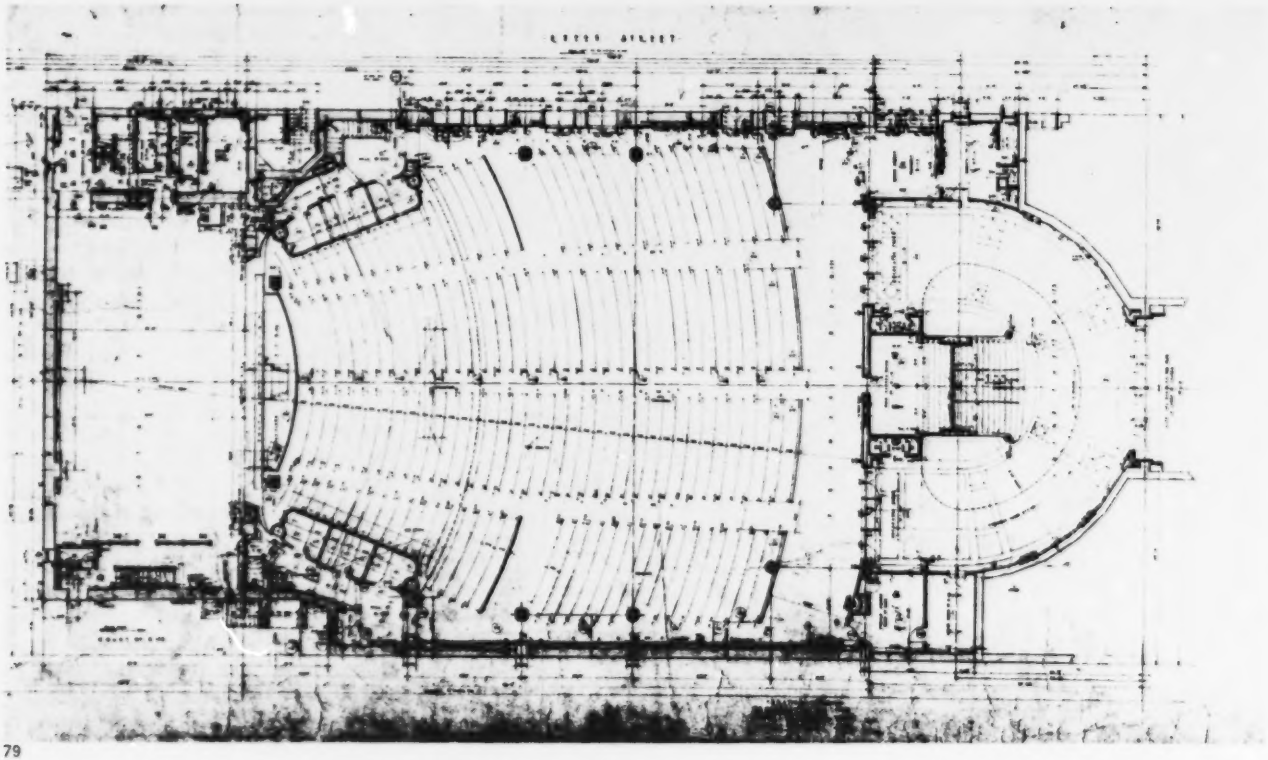
Most of the remaining complex machinery in the theatre was in the projection booth. This included two projectors (after 1929 equipped with sound heads, speakers, amplifiers and so on), a motor generator, an emergency power inductor, a film splicer and motor-driven film rewind, two spotlights and a Brenkert Brenograph effects machine (Figs. 81, 82).

The equipment in the projection room that distinguished the Capitol as a movie palace was the arc spotlights and the Brenograph. The spotlights were used for stage shows and organ solos. Their colours could be changed by placing vari-coloured gelatine slides on racks in front of their lenses. The Brenograph was

a super magic lantern that not only projected song slides for organ interludes, but an endless variety of scenic effects by means of multiple lenses and moving slides and intricate fades and dissolves.[6]

The lighting from the projection booth was supplemented by a quantity of stage lighting: additional spotlights, a row of footlights in reflectors with gelatine filters, and sets of "plain" and "concert" borders – lights along the top of the stage paralleling the footlights. These and the house lights in the auditorium were controlled from a slate-backed switchboard and a set of dimmers backstage, which regulated

79, 80 Architect's plans – layout of rooms and exits on the orchestra and mezzanine levels. (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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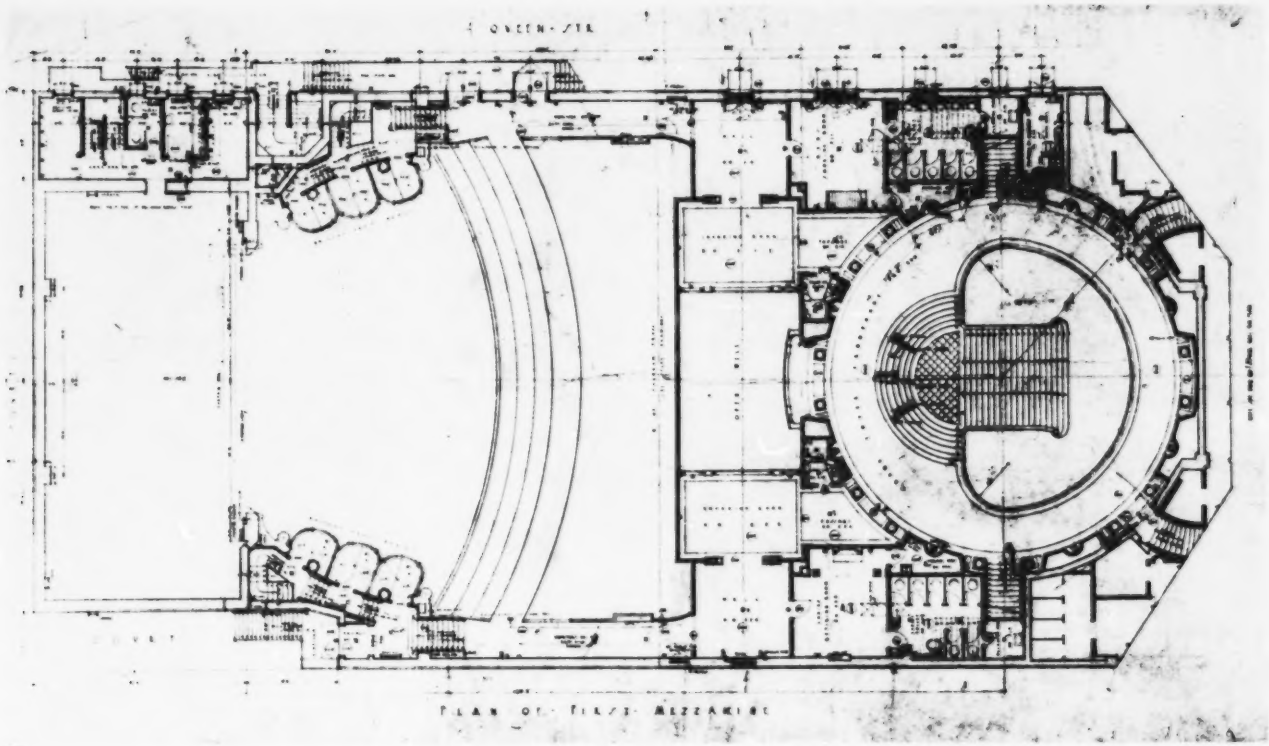
intensities and combinations of shades (Fig. 83).

The rest of the lighting in the lobby, grand foyer, auditorium and on the façade of a movie palace was not only functional but was decorative and entertaining. Light bulbs were either unobtrusive, hidden behind the proscenium arch, on top of cornices, in niches, and behind stained glass, highlighting the theatre's elaborate decorations, or they blazed forth in magnificent chandeliers and marquees and were an essential feature of movie palace razzle-dazzle. The industry's generosity was further conveyed by expensive-looking portable light fixtures in the grand foyer and waiting areas.

Besides spotlights and stage lighting, variety acts in presentation houses required elaborate stage settings.[7] A movie palace's set of flats, drops, wings, legs and props could be used in various combinations with any number of acts, which might range from performing dogs to an excerpt from a grand opera. The theatre's settings could be supplemented or replaced by the scenery that accompanied the big travelling companies (Fig. 34).

Some of the palaces, as well as movie theatres without full stage facilities, made use of stage settings and lighting effects as scenic backgrounds for the "prologue" to the headline attraction – the movie. It was ushered in by an orchestral performance, often together with renditions by soloists and small ensembles on the stage or platform. (In less "classy" houses, the



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organ may have provided the only accompaniment.) Up until the mid-twenties, the scenes and music offered in the prologue in many theatres were intended to convey the atmosphere of the upcoming movie.[8]

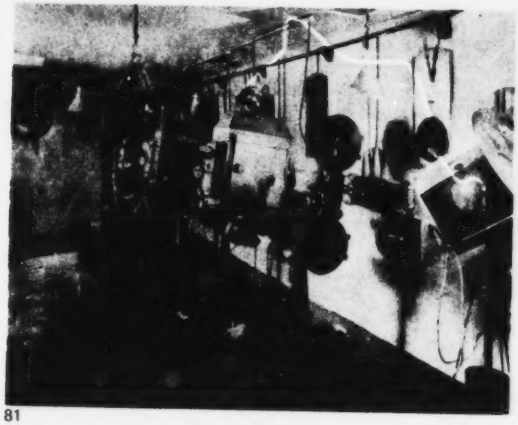
Also popular in the days of the small screen were "permanent" sets which decorated the area between the screen and the proscenium arch. These settings were permanent in that they were fixed; they were replaced periodically in self-respecting theatres. In about 1910, Japanese and Italian garden settings bordered upon many "picture sheets."

Mock Grecian styles...were [also] *in vogue...Arches, columns, peristyles and cornices were knocked up out of timber to provide the appropriate effect. Amid the potted plants and the occasional fountain, scenes were depicted on angled flats which were meant to emphasize the three-dimensional make-believe of the picture on the screen.*[9]

Similarly, exhibitors were advised in a 1921 *Moving Picture World* article that they should embellish their stage space with "furniture, old vases, lamps and flowers" in order to create the illusion of a "habitable room."[10]

Even with no accompanying music or variety act, some stage settings could be immensely entertaining and could even upstage the house decorations. When the screen at the Montreal Imperial was raised from its "woodland" setting at intermission in 1915, a "genuine waterfall [was] bared to view, with volumes of water hurled over the brink and onto the rocks below."[11] The stage setting in 1920 at the Saint John Imperial did not share this sylvan inspiration. A famous Venetian "vista view" by the "Scottish artist Knox" was "reproduced on a

81 From a 1924 Famous Players scrapbook – "One of the Modern Projection Rooms Installed in the Capitol Theatres." (*Famous Players Limited.*)
82 Brenkert Brenograph effects machines, an important part of movie palace magic : the Master Brenograph projected "everything but the motion picture." (*Motion Picture. News*)
83 The switchboard backstage at the Capitol. The ropes on the left were part of the theatre's rigging, used for hauling up and lowering drops, curtains and screen.
84 A modest stage setting (and a hard-working organist) at the Palace Theatre, Calgary in the middle twenties. (*Glenbow-Alberta Institute.*)



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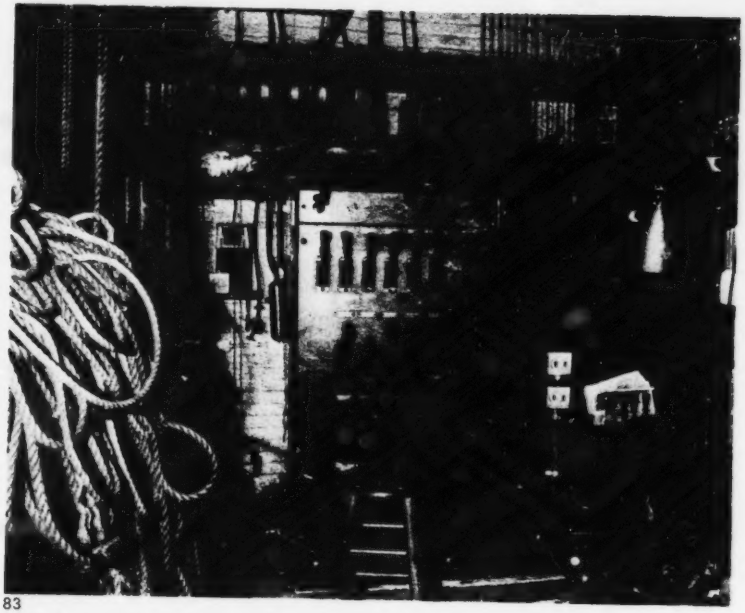

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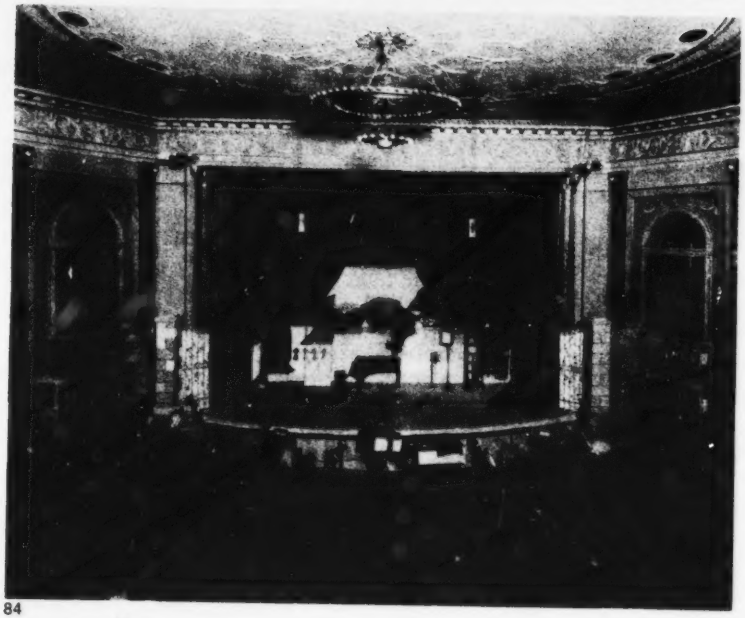

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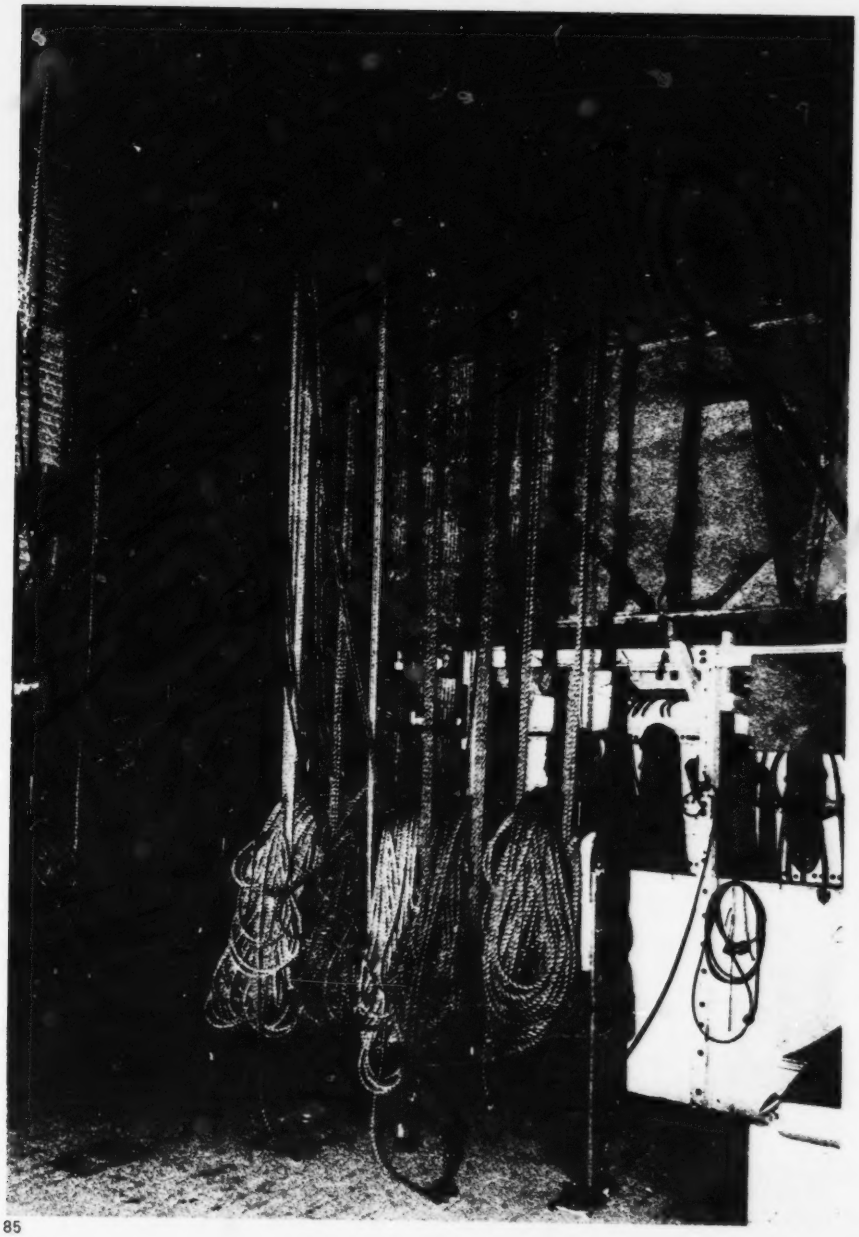
85 Part of the Capitol's 54 sets of lines.



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scale of 15 feet square with remarkable fidelity." "The back waters of St. Mark's Cathedral," the Doge's Palace and the Bridge of Sighs were all depicted. These did not suffice. A contemporary description stated,

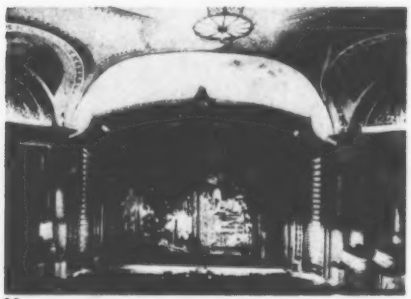
In the foreground is a magnificent Venetian villa with piazza and lawn embellished with flowers. Upon the rise of the curtain, amber lights develop the dawn into day by a clever use of dimmers....From full moon the lights are mixed with blue and deeper blue until the scene becomes a vault of indigo. Behind the cupola of St. Mark's the moon rises, a practical moon which casts shadows with wonderfully natural realism.[12]

Together with an 18- by 24-foot perforated picture screen with black plush masking and legs, most of the Capitol's stage scenery was hoisted into the fly gallery when not required by the appropriate sets of lines (Figs. 85-86). The theatre had 54 sets comprising ropes, sheaves, blocks, sandbags, pinrails and so on. They were arranged on the same side of the stage as the switchboard.

The asbestos curtain was flown directly behind the proscenium arch on its own rigging. It covered the stage opening and was customarily handpainted with a scene that complemented the decoration of the auditorium (Fig. 87).[13] The audience was additionally protected from fire by a water curtain and automatic sprinklers.

There were numerous sets of functional and usually impressive curtains.

89 The stage curtain at Pantages Theatre, Toronto, about 1924. Designed by a "young Russian artist," John Wenger of New York, this curtain was meant to represent "Fairyland," and was suggested by Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird." It was supposedly a duplicate of the curtain in the New York Capitol. (*Famous Players Limited*.)



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The grand drapery of rose velour sporting gold fringes and tassels was festooned over the proscenium arch and concealed the gap between the arch and the top of the screen or scenery. The house curtains, the "working drapery," hung behind the asbestos curtain. These were rose damask with a teaser of floral design. Two "tormentors" curtained the sides of the stage from the audience's view. Farther behind were sets of "travellers" in velours of different colours, which were divided in the centre and opened and closed the standard way (Figs. 88-89).[14]

The Capitol's stage area of 44 feet by 35 feet was bigger than the average vaudeville stage. Movie palaces sometimes housed road shows and operatic performances, though usually not as efficiently as legitimate theatres with larger and more flexible stages.[15] The Capitol's conversion to legitimate performances was complicated by inadequate dressing-room facilities. (Mme. Tremblay remembered that members of Sadler's Wells Ballet Company had to dress behind trunks for a Capitol performance.) Adjoining the stage area it had only nine small dressing rooms which were built for touring vaudeville companies. There was no special housing for the animals that often appeared with vaudeville acts.

Musical accompaniment of vaudeville and silent movies necessitated an orchestra pit and organ console. In the Capitol these were fixed and not mounted on elevator platforms as they were in many of the more extravagant palaces. Two organ lofts were accommodated behind the grilles of the sidewall arches. These chambers were a standard movie palace requirement; some of the biggest palaces boasted seven or eight of them in various areas of their ceilings.

The rest of the building (not the theatre proper) was devoted to other commercial enterprises. Only a fairly narrow lobby was required to lead the patrons past the box office. The extra space extending from the street to the grand foyer was rented, and a procession of shops flanked the marquee and entrance. It was the customary way of employing this valuable commercial space on movie palace lots.

A large ballroom, a feature not found in most other palaces, occupied the mezzanine floor fronting Bank Street. It was originally accessible from the theatre though when it later served as a badminton hall, an Elk's Club room, government offices and a pool hall, its door leading to the mezzanine was locked (Fig. 90).

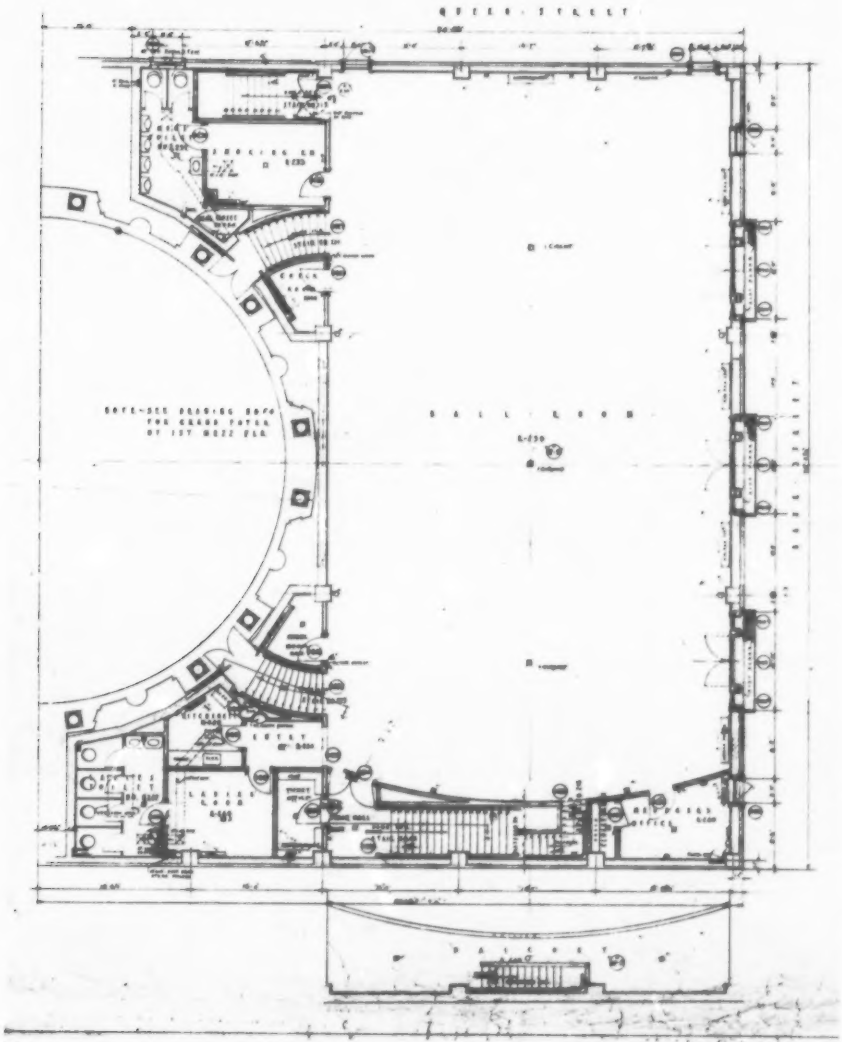
The decoration of the façade did not approach that of the building's interior, and its Queen Street side received no decorative treatment beyond the store fronts. Though passers-by on Queen were perhaps unnecessarily neglected, the Capitol's glittering marquee, one of the most important features of the façade, was designed to attract the attention of their counterparts on Bank Street from blocks away. A potent marquee could easily overcome the competition of large buildings and the signs of other commercial ventures.[16]

The highlights of the façade's decoration above the sidewalk level were two Palladian windows within relieving arches, a virtual insignia of Robert Adam's exterior style (Figs. 91-92).[17] This motif was echoed in the design of the wall mirrors in the lobby and again faintly recalled in the arrangement of columns in the sidewall arches of the auditorium.

The Capitol had a wider façade than did most of Lamb's Canadian theatres. The façades of such theatres as the Imperial and Loew's in Toronto, and the Capitol and Loew's in Montreal had less scope for decorative treatment, as they were considerably narrower than the width of their respective auditoriums. These façades were built in the middle of the block, and from them long lobbies extended perhaps a quarter of a city block to their grand foyers, and were placed at right angles to the auditoriums (Fig. 94).[18] As the Capitol's floor plan was rectangular rather than ell-shaped, the theatre had a relatively short lobby and a large, impressive grand foyer.

As in most other palaces, the Capitol's lobby was embellished with wall

90 Architect's plan of the ballroom opposite the grand staircase on the mezzanine floor. (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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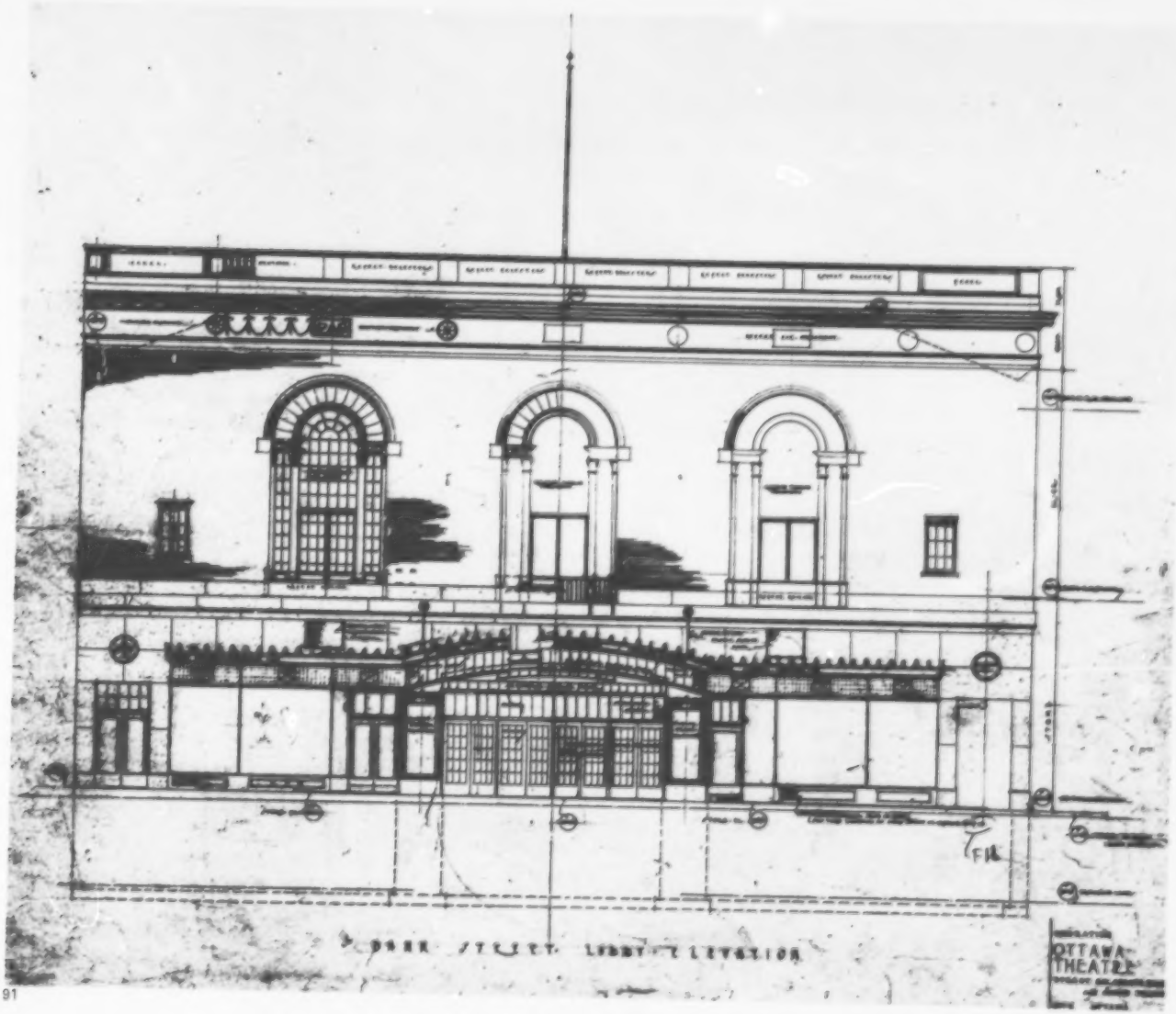
mirrors, scagliola columns and a polychrome panelled ceiling. Lamb's competence in arranging Adam ornament was demonstrated in the design of its ceiling and arabesque-decorated plaster wall panels and cornices (Figs. 94-95).

Though the lobby provided a glamourous introduction, the vista of the grand foyer, with its marble staircase, sweeping balustrade and huge dome was designed to be breathtaking (Fig. 96). (The theatre's secretary heard such exclamations from patrons in this area as, "It's a castle! It's a palace!"). No grand foyer in Lamb's other Canadian theatres seemed to have had the Capitol's area or height. In the Toronto Imperial and Loew's and the Capitol in Montreal, the patron entered the grand foyer on the mezzanine floors and descended staircases to the auditoriums (Fig. 97).

Lamb theorized that the patron should not be brought "directly into the full richness and intensity of the decorative scheme."

The outer vestibules only give a faint indication of the richness of the interior, and as we pass through lobbies and foyers, the full tone of colour and gold is gradually attained, the lighter colours in the vestibules and foyers, the darker and richer and fuller in the theatre proper. This is in inverse proportion to the light, which is brighter at the entrance and tapers off toward the auditorium.[19]

91, 92 Two phases of a façade. *91*, Architect's plan. The ballroom was located behind the three Palladian windows. Notice that Lamb designed a marquee as well as display frames. *92*, The earliest photo found of the completed theatre. There is a vertical marquee mostly hidden by the telephone pole. (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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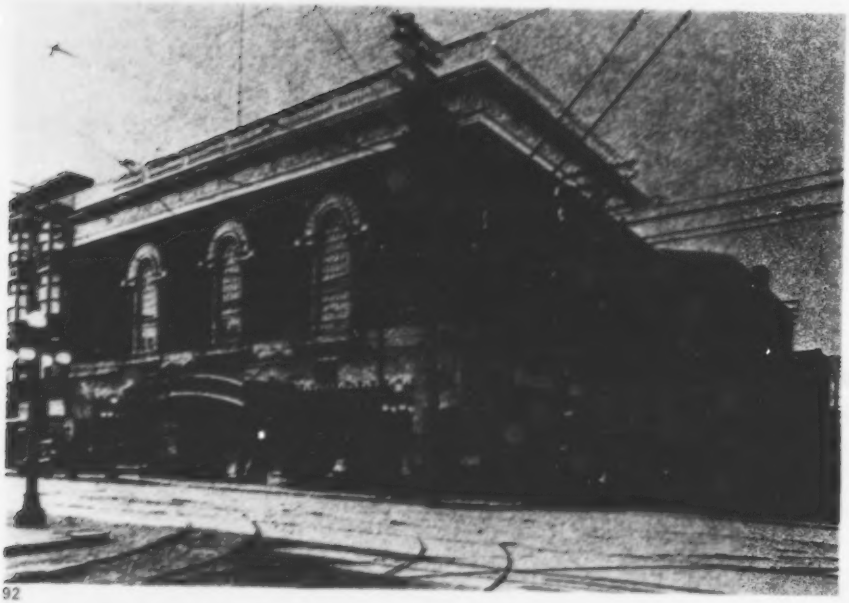
93 Another Lamb facade: Loew's Theatre in Montreal. (*Famous Players Limited, 1930.*)
94 The lobby of the Ottawa Capitol in happier days. The photograph was taken about 1931, after an expensive redecorating job. When the theatre closed in 1970, the capitals of the columns, the arabesque panels and frieze and the box office were white, and the latter had been deprived of its shirred silk curtains. (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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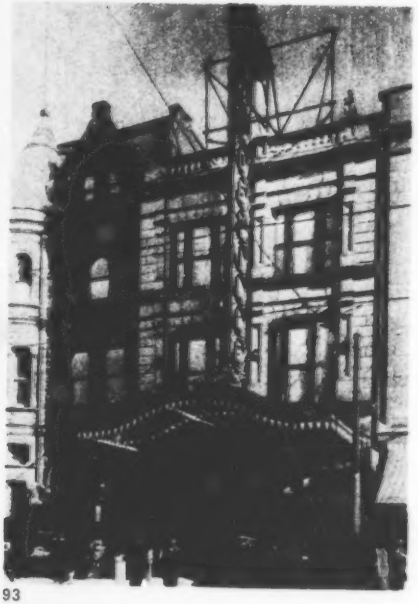

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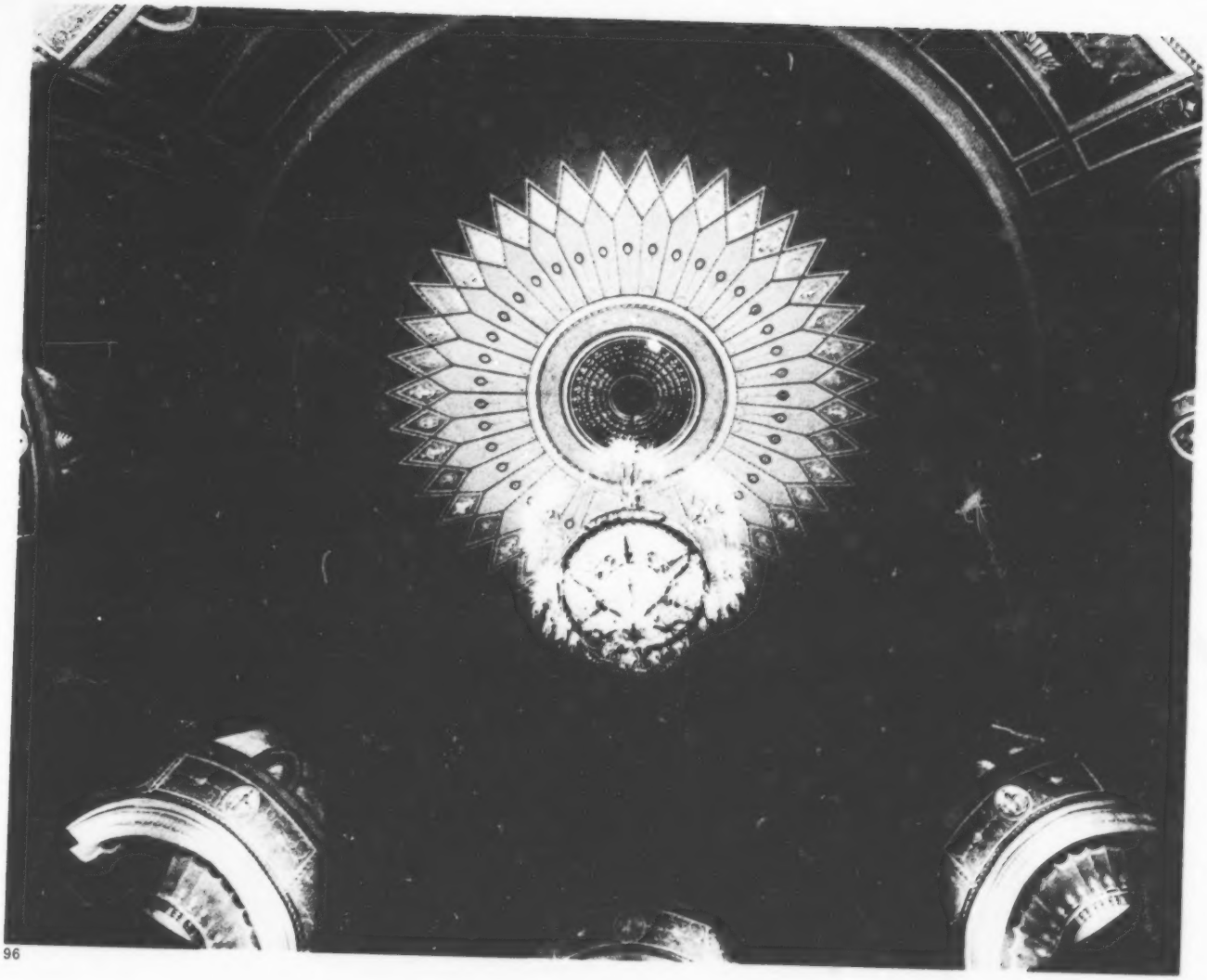
96 The view from the bottom of the stairs, grand foyer.



97 The grand foyer in Loew's Montreal, which was not as grand as that of the Ottawa Capitol. (*Famous Players Limited, 1930.*)
98 Inside view of the third drawing room at the Earl of Derby's house in Grosvenor Square, Robert Adam, architect, 1773. (*B. T. Batsford, The Decorative Work of Robert and James Adam, 1901.*)

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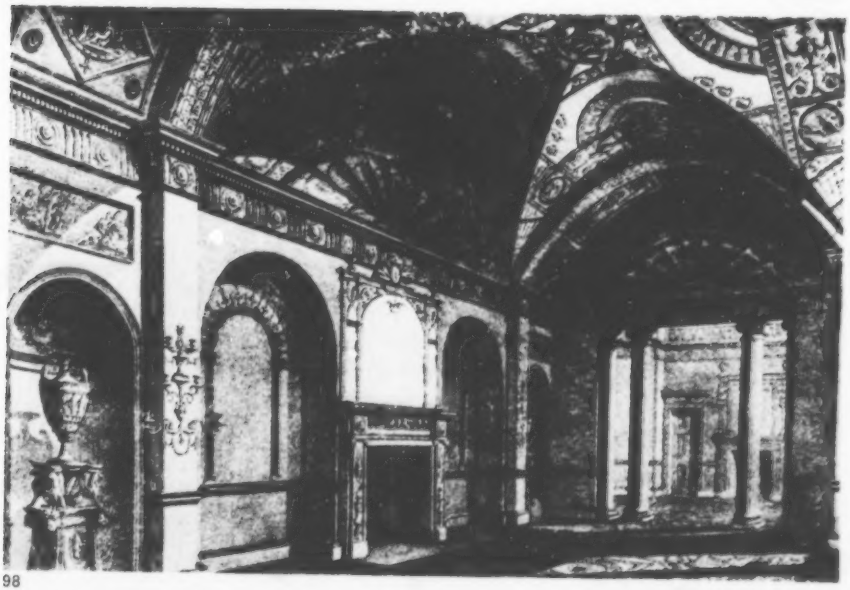

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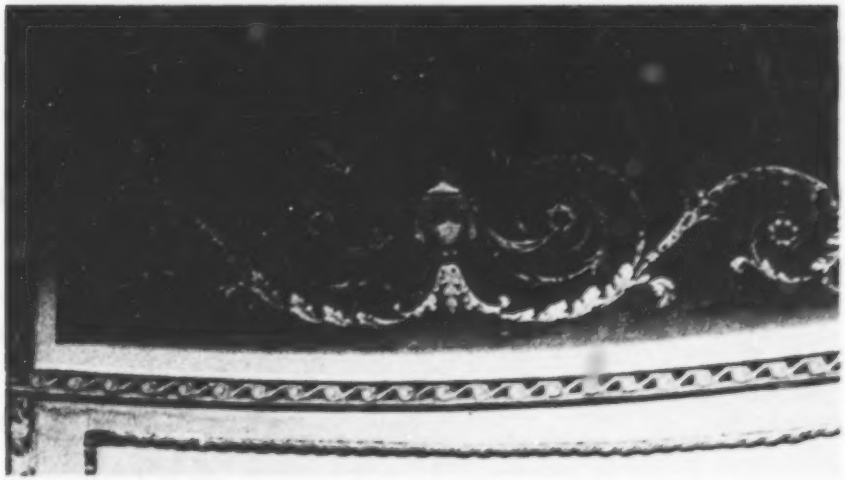
The Capitol's grand foyer seems to have been the climax of the design. Its decoration was testimony to Lamb's sense of balance, and to his ability to apply rich decoration while retaining the essential Adam lightness, as well as to his faculty for combining apparently incompatible motifs into a unified design. The unity of design was partially achieved by the use of three predominant colours, gold, mulberry and old rose.[20]

The arrangement of the niches, Ionic columns and panels of the grand foyer was reminiscent of Adam's design for the great drawing room, Derby House, Grosvenor Square, London. Many decorative features are common to both. Though Adam designed a groin-vaulted ceiling with barrel-vaulted lateral panels, Lamb's illuminated coves over the doorways gave an impression of similar vaulting (Fig. 98; *see* Figure 110).

The decoration of the auditorium was probably not adapted from any one Adam design (though it provides a good example of Adam revival), and was not as distinctive in the movie palace context as the grand foyer. Though few of Lamb's Canadian auditoriums were duplicates of each other, most in his "Adam period" shared such common decorative features as great fluted Corinthian columns in the

96 The view from the bottom of the stairs, grand foyer.

101 An Adam-derived arabesque panel which decorated the grand foyer ceiling of the Capitol. Its decorative components are swags, rinceaux, an urn and a palmette.



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sidewall arches, fabric wall panels and elaborate circular and oval leaded glass illuminated panels on the soffits of the boxes and balcony (Figs. 99-100).

Lamb employed nearly all of the typical Adam motifs in the plaster decoration of the lobby, grand foyer and auditorium. And, for the most part, the arabesque panels, cameos, urns swags, *rinceaux*, medallions, bellflowers and so on were well executed, with a delicate linear quality (Fig. 101). Lamb was also faithful to Adam in his use of space-embracing ovoids, circles and ellipses. A semi-circular plan for the grand foyer promenade was combined felicitously with an elliptical plan for its mezzanine floor. Both domes were built up from ornate concentric circles.

Other motifs Lamb employed were related more to the purpose of the building than to specific Adam designs. The plaster friezes of the sidewall arches in the auditorium depicted music-making and dancing putti with an appreciative audience of one seated female figure. A section of this scene was reproduced in the wall panels over the niches of the grand foyer's mezzanine, and the two dancing figures again appeared in its ceiling decoration (Figs. 102-103). Similar but not identical panels of dancing and music-making putti decorated the convex sweep of the balcony front as well as the fronts of the balcony boxes. A damsel holding dramatic symbols appeared in the decoration of the grand foyer's dome. Plaques of dancing ladies graced the proscenium arch, which was topped with pedestals decorated with conventionalized bas-relief lyres. The mural of the sounding board sported an unrecognizable entertainment scene of epic proportions (Figs. 104-105).[21]

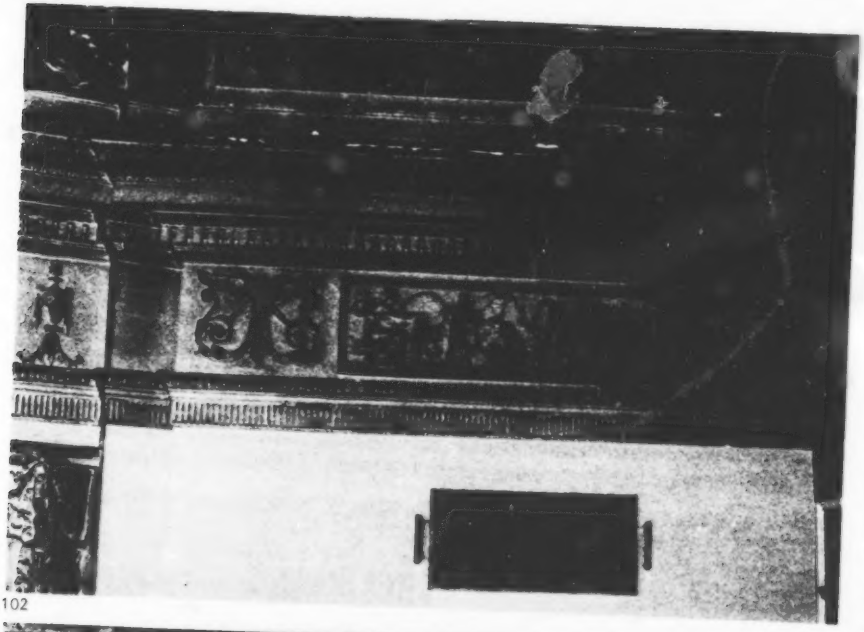
Much of the decoration of the waiting rooms, rest rooms, vomitories and stairways owed less to Robert Adam. Apparently, Adam's delicate ornament was thought to be out of place in the men's smoking room, and the more "robust" style of Tudor revival was chosen.[22] The decoration of the ladies' cosmetic room was more in keeping with the rest of the theatre's decor, though the torchières and the mantel of the fake fireplace were the only Adam-derived features (Figs. 106, 107). Still, many of the theatre's patrons had never seen lounges as luxurious as these. In movie palace terms, accuracy of style was a secondary consideration as long as the patron's impression that he was in a special, splendid edifice was not disturbed.[23] To this purpose, standard equipment in the Capitol and other movie palaces included draperies, carpeting and furniture that complemented the theatre's luxurious decor (Figs. 108-109). Framed paintings in the foyer supposedly elevated the patron's taste. Writing tables, and chairs and overstuffed sofas upholstered in such fabrics as "velour tapestry," cut velvet and damask were provided.[24] The *Citizen* wrote in 1920 that "the feet of the visitor literally sink into the maze of old rose carpet." A "magnificent Persian rug" graced the foyer in B. F. Keith days.[25]

According to articles on their respective openings, the Ottawa Capitol's mezzanine was "gorgeously furnished in rose and gold Chippendale furniture" (Figs. 110-111), while Toronto's Imperial boasted "the suite

102 Panel with dancing and music-making putti repeated in the plaster frieze of the sidewall arches in the auditorium. The flanking panels are decorated with grotesques, a term applied to ornaments depicting monsters, creatures half-human and half-animal, or half-man (or -angel) and half-vegetation.

103 The motif of dancing and music-making putti repeated in panels over the niches of the grand foyer and in its ceiling.

104 More representations of drama, dance and music in the Capitol. The theatrical lady of the grand foyer dome.



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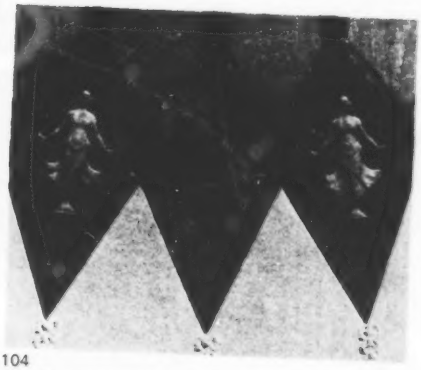

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made and used for the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales at Government House," and the Sheraton tea table of the ladies' lounge in the Capitol, Montreal, was equipped with "Indian tree-pattern china."[26]

Some exotic touches were introduced into two of Lamb's theatres opened in 1921. The Montreal Capitol was provided with a fountain at the rear of the auditorium and a "friendly parrot" in the ladies' rest room. Caged canaries decorated the Winnipeg Capitol's foyer. (The Winnipeg Capitol's chief rival, the Allen theatre which had opened the previous year, had introduced California orange trees to its mezzanine promenade.)[27]

In its halcyon days, the ladies' cosmetic room was described as "delicately lovely as a rare jewel", with its

107 View of the "robust" men's smoking room in the Capitol.

107

"Georgian mahogany" furniture, green and old-rose silk panelled walls, and hand-painted floral border. The gentlemens' retiring room had gloried in "heavy green and gold damask curtains," "brown leather" lounge seats and a "deep rich red velvet" rug.[28]

Fabric wall panels decorated staircases and vomitories in the Ottawa Capitol and most of Lamb's Canadian palaces. Apparently, these and similar panels in the auditorium were once covered with "rich rose velvet."[29] The last time the theatre was decorated, many of these panels were merely painted; those of the staircase and vomitory areas were covered in red and gold brocade.

In the declining years of the movie palace, such expensive and destructible fripperies as velvet wall panels were not replaced. The Capitol was extravagantly redecorated in 1931, but tended to become plainer with age, as decorating costs mounted and audiences dwindled. After 1931, the lobby lost shirred silk curtains, heavily fringed rose and gold lambrequins, a "magnificent panoramic view of Ottawa painted as a mural" and a series of small five-tier crystal chandeliers.[30] It gained red and beige wallpaper and heavy plaster sconces produced by the decorating firm, Belgian Art Studios. Some of the celebrated furniture of the grand foyer was removed, and some replaced with more ordinary pieces. The doorways on the mezzanine were deprived of their festooned "silk tapestry" drapes and lambrequins. Before a painted partition and a Formica candy bar blocked off the embrasure,[31] patrons could look over its balustrade into a portion of the rear orchestra seats. It had become known as "spitball gallery," as the theatres' younger patrons did not confine themselves to looking. It finally accommodated air-conditioning ducts that ran between the mens' and ladies' rooms.

The auditorium's decoration was not substantially altered. Its fabric wall panels and its orchestra pit were eliminated, and it acquired ventilating fans in the rim of its dome. Its original colours were described as "ivories and warm greys, with blue and black Wedgwood panels."[32] When the theatre closed, its predominant colours were consistent with those of the rest of the house and with Adam decor. They were rose, gold, off-white and blue, with pale green and red in more limited areas. Most of the plaster decorations were highlighted with gilt instead of being completely painted as they were in the foyer.

The Capitol fared better than other palaces in terms of redecoration. Many have suffered from attempts to convert them into more economical, modern movie houses, as decorators have almost invariably rendered monochrome their domes, friezes and panels. Other palaces (like Loew's Yonge Street, Toronto) have lost their boxes, throwing off the balance of the auditorium, or like the Palace in Montreal gained "moderne" murals and other unsuitable decorations. Certain movie palaces (among them Toronto's Uptown and Imperial) have had their death sentences commuted by being converted into 5 or 6 small cinemas (Fig. 112).

Even those who scoff at the ostentation of the palaces might concede that the redecorated and converted houses are not an improvement on the "real thing." The movie palaces' detractors might even admit that skilled architects like Thomas Lamb created balanced and unified designs, well laid out as a whole and in individual details, with pleasing spatial relationships between the various features (the grouping of the boxes, the sweep of the balcony and the ceiling and the proportions of the decorative features). And, for the most part, Lamb applied Adam motifs with academic correctness and imagination, but without wholesale borrowing from the master.

108, 109 Some examples of movie palace furnishings. *108*, The Palace theatre, Calgary, C. Howard Crane, architect. Writing desks were provided so that patrons could while away their time writing letters before the show started. Here, apparently, talented patrons could also entertain with a piano recital others waiting for intermission. Hopefully, the auditorium was soundproof. *109*, C. Howard Crane's Tivoli theatre (originally the Walkerville) in Walkerville, equipped with light wicker furniture and roses. (*Famous Players Limited, 1930.*)

110, 111 Some grand foyer furnishings in the Ottawa Capitol before television. In Figure 110, the open well can be seen discreetly blocked off by an extremely protuberant "buddha" and a side table. (*Famous Players Limited, ca. 1931.*)

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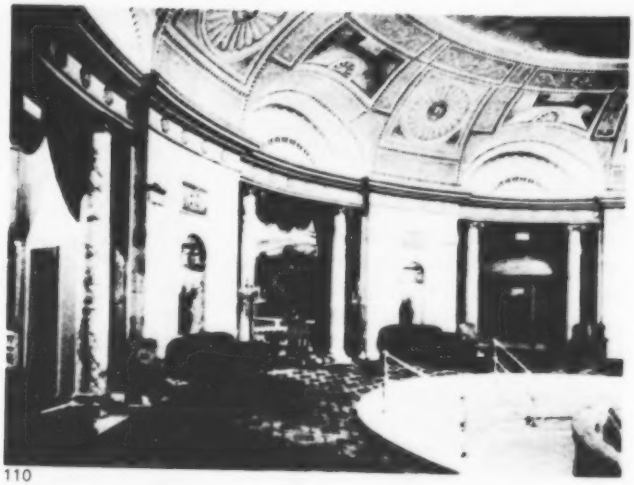

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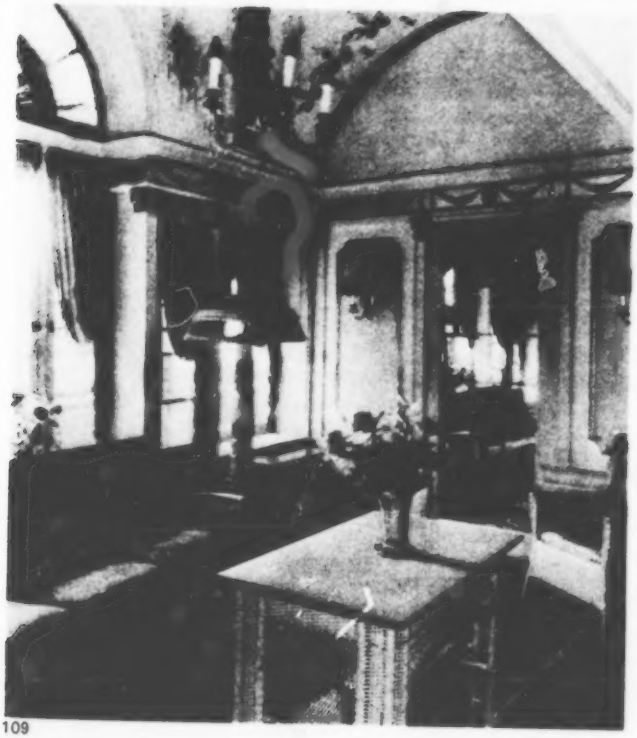

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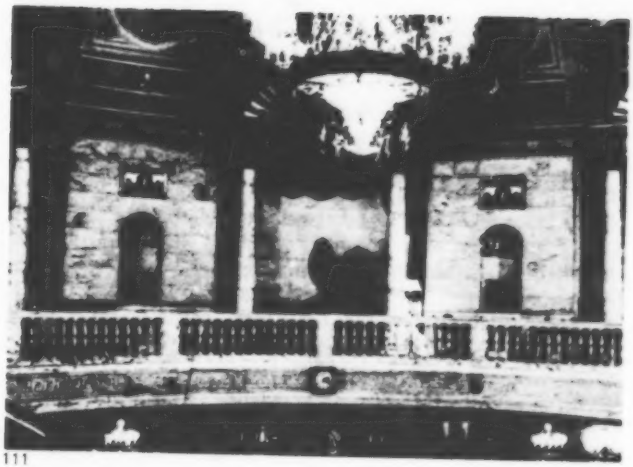

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Sound

The decoration of the Capitol and other movie palaces had no constructional significance, and may have been wasteful and excessive in the view of modern theatre architects, but according to Theodore Jung, architect, colleague and relative of Thomas Lamb, these decorations were not without acoustic significance. Although the design of movie palaces, with their long, raking balconies and ever-present domes, would seem to have presented a host of acoustical problems, such were lacking in the majority of Lamb's theatres.[1]

Acoustically, said Mr. Jung, a movie palace required an uneven surface. The grilles and various ornaments broke up and absorbed sound waves, thus preventing unpleasant echoes. Draperies and textile panels in the auditorium performed the same function. Sometimes under these textile panels there was additional sound-absorbing material like Ozite.[2]

Movie palace sound did not emanate from a series of speakers in all areas of the auditorium, but from the orchestra pit, the front portion of the stage, and from the organ grilles. Mostly musical sound waves were deflected from the sounding board to all parts of the auditorium. The sounding board was the curved ceiling area between the proscenium arch and the farthest reaches above the sidewall arches. Its surface was relatively unbroken, and usually displayed a large mural in keeping with the rest of the house decorations (Fig. 113).

An additional "sounding board" was found to be necessary after the Capitol's orchestra pit fell into disuse and was covered over, forcing visiting orchestras to play on the stage. The Ottawa Civic Symphony had a plywood backdrop built to prevent their music from escaping into the fly tower. The Tremblay Concert Series also built a "sound barrier" that rested on this drop.

In 1920, however, the orchestra played from the pit to accompany vaudeville acts and silent movies. The sizes of these orchestras ranged from 15 to 20 musicians in the smaller palaces like the Capitol to 40 or 50 in the biggest (Fig. 114).[3] The orchestras alone were often considered to be worth the admission price, and in pre-radio days introduced millions to classical music.[4] Many of these movie palace orchestras had very good reputations, and sometimes formed the nuclei of municipal symphony orchestras when their movie palace days were over.[5]

The musicians had to be competent in order to provide the appropriate mood for swiftly changing scenes on the screen. The orchestra leader constantly kept an eye on the screen to coordinate the musical accompaniment. In the big palaces, he could mechanically adjust the speed of the movie with dials on his conductor's desk.[6]

Many movies were furnished with cue sheets or specially prepared scores, but the largest palaces usually employed a musical director who imaginatively scored the movies that were to run in the theatre with the aid of a large music library. Otherwise, conductors in smaller houses relied on Erno Rapee's helpfully cross-indexed *Moods and Motives for Motion Pictures* or some other text when no score was provided.[7]

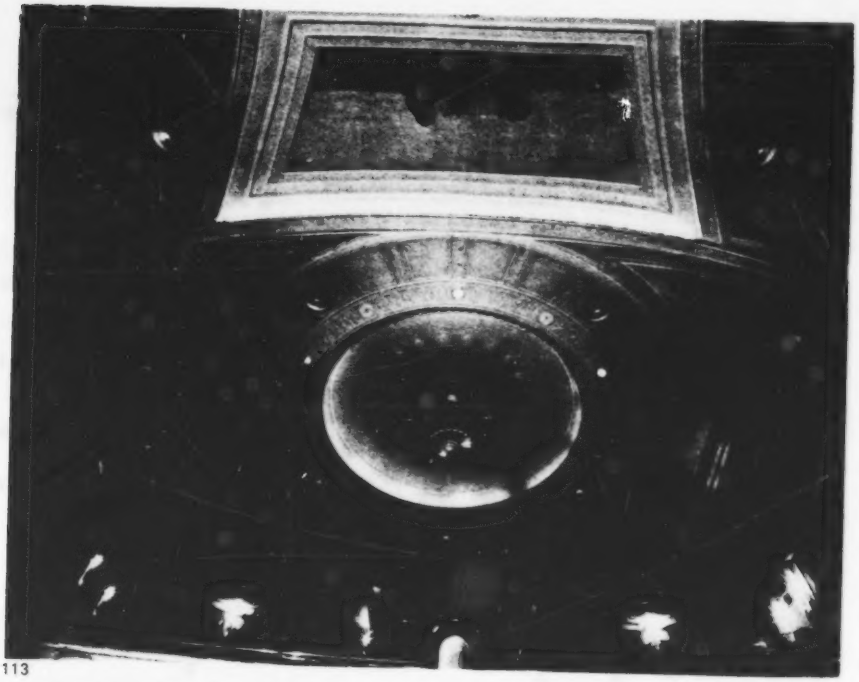
In a "Musical Suggestion Synopsis" published in *Moving Picture World* in 1918, the following was proposed for the Metro production "Her Boy:"

Theme for the Mother – Andantino. Suggest "Consolation," Liszt; "Remembrance," Debussy, or "Melodie," Tschaikowsky. An emotional drama taking place in the South. It is patriotic in the extreme, and will require a medley of patriotic songs if possible. Many pathetic selections are required with a Southern atmosphere to them. Use "Ol' Kentucky Home," "Swannee River," etc., as fill in music for neutral scenes. In the fourth reel soldiers are singing "We'll Hang the Kaiser to a Sour Apple Tree." Use the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as the melody necessary. This should be followed by church music. Cue sheet can be obtained from Metro Exchange.[8]

In nickelodeon days, a lone piano, or a little later on, a piano, a violin and a set of drums had accompanied the short reels, not only for entertainment purposes, but also to drown out the noise of the projector in the auditorium.[9] And only rarely did the accompaniment have much rapport with the scene being projected. In reviewing the performance of a pianist in an unpretentious movie theatre in 1911, Louis Reeves Harrison wrote with some surprise, "she had evidently done some thinking ahead, possibly she had read a summary of the plays in advance; anyway she was on time

113 Another view of the Capitol's sounding board, to show the relative positions of the organ grilles in the side-wall arches (to the left and right of the sounding board) and the auditorium dome.

114 The orchestra of the Palace theatre, Calgary, in an eastern mood. The musicians have temporarily abandoned their positions in the orchestra pit visible at the bottom of the picture. (*Glenbow-Alberta Institute*).



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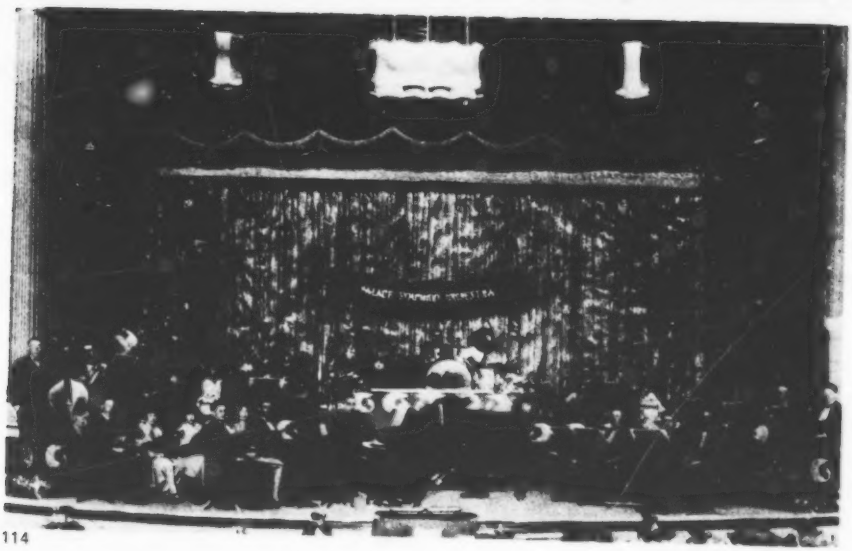

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at every change of scene with something suited to the sentiment."[10]

In some nickelodeons, fitting sound effects were provided by someone hidden behind the screen or elsewhere in the auditorium who was equipped with whistles, hollow blocks, pistols with blank shells, pieces of broken glass, and other miscellaneous objects. Some mysterious sound effects were explained by an article in the *Moving Picture World* in 1907: *The sound of horses' hooves upon a pavement is made very realistic by the use of a pair of cocoanut shells which are applied to a marble slab in a corresponding manner....Sand paper blocks...have a number of uses; the escape of steam from a locomotive, splash of water and a number of other effects are produced by this common article.*[11]

In movie palace days, a barrage of sound effects was combined in the theatre organ, an instrument capable of imitating any orchestral sound and then some (Fig. 115). The large four-manual instruments could produce about 20 ready-made sound effects. Interestingly, these effects were produced mechanically with some of the same instruments used in the nickelodeon. To quote from a cinema organ guide, "horses hoofs are simply half cocoanut shells clapped together by mechanical means."[12]

Theatre organs were standard equipment in movie palaces and any other movie house of any pretensions.[13] Theatre organs and their lofts

had no precedent in any other building, and were a movie palace phenomenon. Organ solos could be attractions rating the marquee's attention. As well, theatre organs provided ideal accompaniment for silent movies. Combined with the ornamental grandeur of the house, the theatre organ and orchestra gave the movie palaces their atmosphere, transported their patrons from mundane concerns, and did away with memories of tinkling pianos in stuffy nickelodeons.

The theatre organ was cheaper and more versatile in the long run than a full orchestra. But no matter how wonderful its theatre organ was, no movie palace could dispense with its orchestra, as it accompanied live acts and was an added note of class. Neither could movie palace owners afford to pay an orchestra to play for every show, and this was also a physical impossibility for the musicians. Thus, many movie shows were accompanied only by a theatre organ.[14]

Organ chambers (or lofts), usually located behind the sidewall arches, accommodated the theatre organ's pipes and percussion with their accompanying wind chests and swell shutters. These were controlled, together with the blower generator and relay panel, by the console, and were connected by hundreds of fine wires enclosed in flexible electric cable and a metal wind trunk.[15]

This arrangement of pipes far away from the console was possible because Robert Hope-Jones, the father of the theatre organ (or unit orchestra), had devised "a system for opening and closing the valves in the pipes with electromagnets, which were, in turn, controlled by sterling silver electrical contacts under each key on the console."[16] Hope-Jones also invented the system of stopkeys (usually arranged in a semicircle above the keyboard of the console) which controlled the ranks of pipes at different pitches. The theatre organist could thus change his stops easily and frequently to keep up to orchestral and even dance-band tempos, unlike the church organist who relied on clumsy draw stops. The theatre organist was assisted by the pistons (white buttons) placed underneath the manuals (or keyboards) which allowed him to change his combinations of stops instantaneously.[17]

A standard 32-note pedalboard together with toe pistons worked various ranks of pipes and sound effects. The balanced swell pedals at the organist's feet controlled the volume of sound produced in the chamber.[18]

Though it received a big build-up in the Ottawa *Citizen* at the opening, the Capitol's organ (which was subsequently installed) was a modest affair, with two manuals (the upper, solo and the lower, accompaniment) and nine or ten ranks of pipes.[19] It was capable of no sound effects and could not even rise from the pit, dramatically lighted. It was built by Warren and Son, Ltd., of Woodstock, Ontario, primarily church organ builders. It contained such stops as Fugara and Zart flute, abnormal to theatre organs. It did not have a horseshoe console like more expensive organs. Its variously coloured stopkeys were arranged in a straight line. It had eight pistons for the keyboard which were only adjustable from the loft, and one toe piston that brought in the full organ. It had a standard pedal-board, and a crescendo and a solo pedal. The black paint on only the left hand pedals was considerably worn down. Only a section of the console was made of mahogany. The remainder was soft wood – possibly pine – with a mahogany stain. The console was placed slightly under the stage apron on the left of the orchestra pit.

Although two organ chambers were designed for the theatre, one behind each sidewall arch, there is much evidence that only one of them had been used.[20] One chamber was bare of any hardware, save brackets to support a windtrunk, and there was no take-off from the main windtrunk that would have allowed an extension into the other chamber.

There was a single phase, 400-volt, five-horsepower blower with wooden casing and a metal fanwheel, together with a direct current generator in a small, blocked-off section of the chamber. This was a somewhat unusual arrangement, as ordinarily the organ blower was installed in the theatre's basement. The remainder of the organ chamber accommodated two windchests, one tremulant box, swell shutters, the relay panel, and nine or ten ranks of wooden and metal pipes, as well as the xylophone, harp and percussion instruments. All this hardware was installed through an access door halfway up the exterior of the building. The stairs leading to the door were removed after installation (Fig. 116).[21]

115 The Mighty Wurlitzer. The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company's illustration of their premise, "The Wurlitzer combines the world's finest pipe organ with all the different voices of the Symphony Orchestra under the control of one musician." (*Wurlitzer Catalogue.*)

115

It is not certain exactly what duplication of stops occurred or how many ranks the Capitol organ had as its relay board was too dirty to be readable. The access door (leading outside) had been left slightly open for years. Much of the chamber's equipment was smashed or removed to make way for air-conditioning ducts in 1953.

The console was listed in an inventory as early as 1937 as being in bad condition (Figs. 117-118). It was probably last played in about 1930 or 1931.

The era of the theatre organ and orchestra came to an end more or less with the introduction of sound movies. They caused a revolution in all phases of the movie industry, in its production, personnel, equipment and theatres. Contrary to popular belief, sound movies were not first produced in 1926-27.[22] Experiments had been made ever since the inception of moving pictures, though an adequate amplifier was first developed about 1914. Sound engineers were refused financial support from the movie industry for a number of good reasons. Producers had large stocks of expensive silent films suitable for a world market, as well as actors and actresses under contract whose dramatic technique was pantomine. (As well, some of them were illiterate or could speak little English, thus could not read scripts.) Production and theatre equipment would have to be bought or altered at enormous cost to accommodate sound movies. Not the least consideration was that silent films had attained good quality, were popular and made money, and all experimental showings of talking movies had been obvious failures.[23]

In 1927 Warner Brothers was facing bankruptcy, and joined with Western Electric to produce "Vitaphone" sound movies, hoping such a gimmick would save the studio. To the surprise of most observers, talking

116 One of the access doors to the organ loft – accessible only by ladder from the outside. (*Famous Players Limited.*)
117 The neglected Capitol organ. (In contrast, *see* Figure 118, p. 111.) (*Geoffrey Paterson photo, 1969.*)

pictures were an overwhelming success from then on. It soon became apparent that "any sound film, no matter how bad, could fill any theatre, however ratty, while across the street the most super silent movie played to empty seats in the most sumptuous movie cathedrals."[24]

It cost between ten and thirty thousand dollars to equip a theatre for sound. By 1930, 234 different types of sound equipment were being produced for theatres.

B. F. Keith's (later Ottawa's Capitol) first presented sound movies on 27 April 1929. It was not enough to have the biggest and most ornate theatre in Ottawa. Business had been affected adversely since the Regent's sound installation, Ottawa's first, in December 1928.[25] Other Ottawa theatres had been wired for sound while Keith's was showing silent movies. A number of movie theatre managers, including J. M. Franklin of B. F. Keith's, had announced in September 1928 that sound installations for their houses were imminent. According to a *Citizen* report, the musicians "sort of climbed up on the various managers' collective necks and retractions were in order."[26] As the Keith orchestra had signed a two-year contract, the musicians sat in the pit until September 1931. For the last six months they did not play a note.

The RCA Photophone engineer who supervised the installation at Keith's announced that "about thirty miles of wire, two truck loads of other accessories, and from 8 to 20 dynamic loud speakers" were required to convert a big theatre. Through the "beam"

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system of sound distribution and the proper placement of loudspeakers, the theatre was "literally sprayed with sound", which was distributed to all parts of the house with equal intensity.[27]

RCA Photophone was the manufacturing subsidiary of RCA organized in 1928. It produced both sound-on-disk and sound-on-film, the two commercial methods of recording and producing sound movies, though it was chiefly concerned with the former.[28] RCA Photophone projectors were equipped for both methods, like most other projectors at the time. RCA Photophone equipment was designed and built by General Electric and Westinghouse.

Sound movies eventually caused vaudeville to be discontinued in the palaces. It became obvious to exhibitors that talking movies drew crowds without this expensive additional feature. B. F. Keith's (Ottawa) dropped vaudeville in June 1929. It was revived with great success in September 1929 but was finally discontinued in May 1930. It was presented intermittently in the 1930s, and even once in a while in the 1940s.

It is not certain precisely how acoustical considerations derived from talking pictures affected theatre design. Dennis Sharp asserts,

The talkies created an immediate demand for a new type of auditorium: an acoustic box muffled to keep the sound in and protected to stop noise penetrating from outside. It proved to be the most fundamental change in cinema design since the industry began.[29]

Surely theatres had not in pre-talkie days welcomed penetrating street noises and escaping musical sounds. Movie palaces eventually adapted quite well to sound movies, though of course they had not been designed to be dotted with loudspeakers. Initially, certain acoustical problems like "sidewall echoes" and "standing waves" were reported but these were solved by 1930 with the development of multi-cellular, high-frequency horn loudspeakers.[30]

It is sometimes maintained that the "realism" of sound movies had a profound effect on theatre design. "Music, talk, and natural noises were not entirely in accord with the lavish unreality of the theatres or the pastiche nature of their lush stage setting."[31] This may be true to the extent that sound movies limited the imagination of the patron and made the theatre less of "a place to dream in." It seems that the fundamental impact of sound movies was that they more or less deprived the palaces of their stage shows, their lighting extravaganzas, their orchestra, and their organs. Thus sound movies influenced theatre architecture in that the theatres built after the decline of vaudeville palpably needed no stages with huge proscenium arches,[32] no sounding boards, no orchestra pits and no box seats. Furthermore, the success of sound movies indicated to movie palace magnates that very modest houses could pack them in; the quality of the movie, not the quality of the theatre, was the determining factor. Theatres built thereafter were generally far less grandiose and less imaginative.

The Circuits

In the same year as RCA Photophone was organized, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) bought the theatre chain interests of two of the biggest vaudeville circuits, B. F. Keith and Orpheum, as well as the film producing company FBO or Film Booking Office owned by Joseph P. Kennedy. The deal was officially closed in February 1929. The new company, Radio-Keith-Orpheum (or RKO), was firmly established in the industry both in exhibition and production. The amalgamated theatre circuits provided outlets for "Radio Pictures," the sound movies of the producing company.[1]

In Canada, the merger was compounded by an agreement reached in 1929 whereby RKO and Famous Players Canadian Corporation formed a new company, Radio Keith Orpheum Canada Limited, to operate 12 first-run houses. Ottawa's RKO Keith theatre was included in the deal.[2] The theatre became the RKO Capitol in 1931; as Famous Players eventually supplanted RKO, a few years later, the initials RKO were discarded.

It would be an oversight to write about the history of Canadian exhibition without reference to the circuits that controlled most movie palaces and other important houses. However, only those circuits that owned the Ottawa Capitol will be examined in detail.

In the United States and Canada, circuit ownership had a fundamental impact on the entertainment presented in a theatre, the decor and size of the

house, as well as on film production in Hollywood. Only large corporations could afford the investment involved in building movie palaces. They could retain expensive architects, and could indulge in the rivalry with other giant corporations which resulted in progressively more gaudy and outlandish developments in theatre architecture, decoration, stage entertainment and special effects. With affiliated exhibitors, large circuits virtually monopolized first-run exhibition in large urban centres.[3]

Many circuits were also involved in film production and distribution. Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, a huge New York-based company enmeshed in all phases of the movie industry, began to acquire theatres in about 1919 to provide adequate and profitable playing time for the prime interest, Paramount Pictures. Loew's, on the other hand, entered production in 1919 to protect vast theatre holdings from Famous Players films and profits. B. F. Keith's was not involved in film production until the RKO merger.

The film-producing arms of the companies had guaranteed exhibition in hundreds of first-run houses, and could finance productions with the assured box office. The circuits were thus able to squeeze independent exhibitors out of business or into affiliations. Independent producers could be denied access to chain theatres, and an independent exhibitor could be refused popular films or forced to rent a "block" of company films in order to secure one of exceptional commercial value.[4]

B. F. Keith's and other vaudeville circuits maintained booking offices to provide contracts for vaudeville acts. "High class" acts at competitive prices were booked mainly into chain theatres with large seating capacities. The contracted performers, of course, toured the circuit.

Three vast continental circuits operated Ottawa's movie palace during its lifetime. The Capitol became the object of interesting circuit rivalries from the time it opened.

Loew's Ottawa was built as a link in the Eastern Canadian chain of Loew's theatres which offered vaudeville and photoplays in luxurious surroundings.

A subsidiary Canadian corporation supervised the venture, which was at least partially financed through sale of stocks. Some of the contractors had a vested interest in the theatre ; at least one company was paid in gold-based bonds issued on the first mortgage at 12 per cent interest. These bonds were cashed at a handsome profit when the theatre was sold in 1924.[5]

Loew's Ottawa was one of the last houses in the chain to be built in Canada. An Ottawa newspaper announced in 1920 that Loew's planned five theatres in western Canada, but the programme was never carried out. By the end of 1920, a building boom that had swept Loew's was over.[6]

The vaudeville acts Loew's Ottawa presented were arranged by Marcus Loew Booking Agency in New York. The theatre showed many films made by Metro Studios,[7] Loew's producing company.

The same month as Loew's Ottawa opened, Famous Players Canadian Corporation announced that the company would open within the next year a theatre on Queen Street with a capacity of 2,600. The circuit was well aware that Ottawa probably could not have supported two similar houses with capacities over 2,500. In these days, it was common for a circuit to challenge another's new theatre (or the promise of one) by threatening to build a bigger, more expensive theatre within a few blocks of the original. In a small town or city, the latter might be ruined by such competition, and the challenger hoped that this awareness would prompt the owner to lose his nerve and sell or would encourage a would-be owner to give up his plans to build.[8]

Famous Players Canadian Corporation was a homegrown, aggressive theatre circuit. It had acquired the name Famous Players Canadian and the franchise for distributing Paramount productions in 1920. Initiated in 1916 as The Regent Theatre Company and financed by a coterie of Toronto businessmen, the company prospered, and by early 1919 it owned a number of theatres in Ontario and had procured another name, Paramount Theatres Limited, although the circuit as yet apparently had no connection with Paramount films. These were distributed in Canada by The Famous Players Film Service, an Allen concern. In June 1919, Select, Triangle and Metro films were among the major releases handled throughout Canada

by Regal Films Limited, the distributing arm of Paramount Theatres Limited. (Their officers were practically identical. J. P. Bickell headed Regal, and its managing director was N. L. Nathanson.)[9]

That month, two rumours were published in *Moving Picture World*: Famous Players-Lasky of New York would deprive the Allens' Famous Players Film Service of the Canadian distributing rights for Paramount pictures in September and would award the franchise to Regal Films Limited; and the New York company had "acquired a substantial interest in the theatres controlled by Paramount Theatres Limited." The magazine's vigilant Toronto correspondent was substantially accurate.[10]

Famous Players Canadian was incorporated in January 1920 with a reported capital of $15 million and an 18-year Paramount franchise. Adolph Zukor, head of Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount Publix) was the president of the new company and, it was later maintained, had invested $100,000 in the venture. Contemporary news releases acknowledged that Famous Players-Lasky had made "a large cash investment in the new Canadian company," but that "the majority of directors" would be Canadian and "the bulk of the securities and control of the enterprise would be in Canadian hands."[11] Nearly $12 million in shares was offered to the public, $4 million in first preferred and the rest in second preferred and common stocks.

Royal Securities Limited of Montreal underwrote the capitalization for $4 million.[12] This finance and bond-selling company had been sold to I. W. Killam by Lord Beaverbrook in 1919. Contemporary and certain secondary sources consulted made the assumption that in 1920 Beaverbrook's spectre was still with Royal Securities.[13] The link between Famous Players Canadian and Beaverbrook appeared the more real as he had recently acquired "large motion picture interests" in Great Britain. *Moving Picture World* recorded an announcement made in Toronto in March 1920 which went so far as to "understand" that Beaverbrook was a "heavy investor" in Famous Players Canadian. It continued, "he was slated for a place on the company's board, but felt that it would not be good policy to appear as a director."[14] Possibly in this instance Beaverbrook's name was being exploited in the hope of winning investors.

Famous Players Canadian took over the 20 theatres previously operated by Paramount Theatres Limited, and set its sights on acquiring 20 more. An extensive building programme was immediately launched, and theatres were bought or built in Montreal, Peterborough, Toronto, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria.

The building of a Famous Players' Ottawa theatre also got under way. Its walls had attained a height of ten feet when construction ceased. Ostensibly, the theatre was placed on the unfair list by the Building Trades Council of Ontario for not abiding by approved wage scales.[15] Possibly Loew's had called an elaborate bluff.

The contest between Loew's and Famous Players was complicated by the announcement in 1923 that B. F. Keith's planned to construct a half-million dollar vaudeville theatre, possibly on Famous Players' Queen Street site. On the heels of this publicity came the announcement that Famous Players was going to buy Loew's Ottawa. It had just purchased Loew's Montreal.

Negotiations ended when the B. F. Keith Company of Canada Limited, newly incorporated with a reported capitalization of $5 million, took over Loew's Ottawa in September 1924. The new company's headquarters were in Montreal, and its president was Edward F. Albee of New York. The corporation did its own financing, and no stock was to be issued to the general public.

Five other theatres were purchased by the new company, the Princess and Imperial in Montreal, Shea's Hippodrome in Toronto, the Lyric in Hamilton, and the Majestic in London. An American source wrote that these theatres previously constituted Canadian United Theatres a chain operated by Mike Shea and Joe Franklin. The *Canadian Moving Picture Digest* merely reported "a number of Canadian interests are merged in the new Keith undertaking."[16]

Though a new company had been formed, the Keith vaudeville circuit was not a newcomer to Canada. In 1913 it had erected two deluxe vaudeville theatres, the Imperial in Montreal and in Saint John, and since at least 1906, Keith vaudeville acts had been booked into affiliated Canadian houses

by its subsidiary, United Booking Office. Neither was Keith vaudeville new to Ottawa audiences in 1924. The Franklin theatre, operated by J. M. Franklin, and Bennett's (subsequently the Dominion) theatre had presented Keith acts. B. F. Keith's was one of the oldest circuits, begun in 1893 when it opened one of the first super deluxe vaudeville houses in Boston. B. F. Keith initially provided the money and gave the circuit its name. He died in 1914, long before the circuit had peaked. (In 1920 it reportedly controlled more than 400 theatres.) Before and after Keith's death, Edward F. Albee was the driving force of the circuit. It became renowned for building palatial vaudeville theatres, for helping to "clean up" vaudeville, and for instistituting the "continuous show."[17]

Loew's Ottawa theatre was not in financial difficulty at the time of the sale to Keith's. The fourth annual meeting of the board of directors of the local holding company (Loew's Ottawa Theatres Limited) reported that the theatre had earned $40,000 profit in 1923, compared to a small deficit the year before.[18] Following the sale, Loew's holdings in Canada dwindled to two theatres in Toronto and one in London. Famous Players Canadian Corporation had acquired Loew's theatres in Hamilton and Windsor. Loew's disengagement was seemingly voluntary; in April 1923 the company had proclaimed that it planned to dispose of all its Canadian holdings in order to pursue expansion in the New England states.[19]

Coincident with the B. F. Keith takeover in Ottawa came the announcement from N. L. Nathanson that Famous Players was proceeding with the construction of its Queen Street theatre. He added significantly that Famous Players was the distributing arm of Paramount, MGM, Pathé and other producing companies, and that his company was a Canadian organization, 95 per cent of its stock being owned by 1,700 resident Canadians. The *Canadian Moving Picture Digest* retorted in an article entitled "Famous Players Patriotic Line of Defense," "he forgot to mention that Famous Players Canadian Corporation is a subsidiary of the Famous Players Company."[20]

Famous Players Canadian had grown from strength to strength since its incorporation. Sidney S. Cohen, chairman of the board of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America, was so alarmed by the company's might in 1924 that he felt constrained to issue

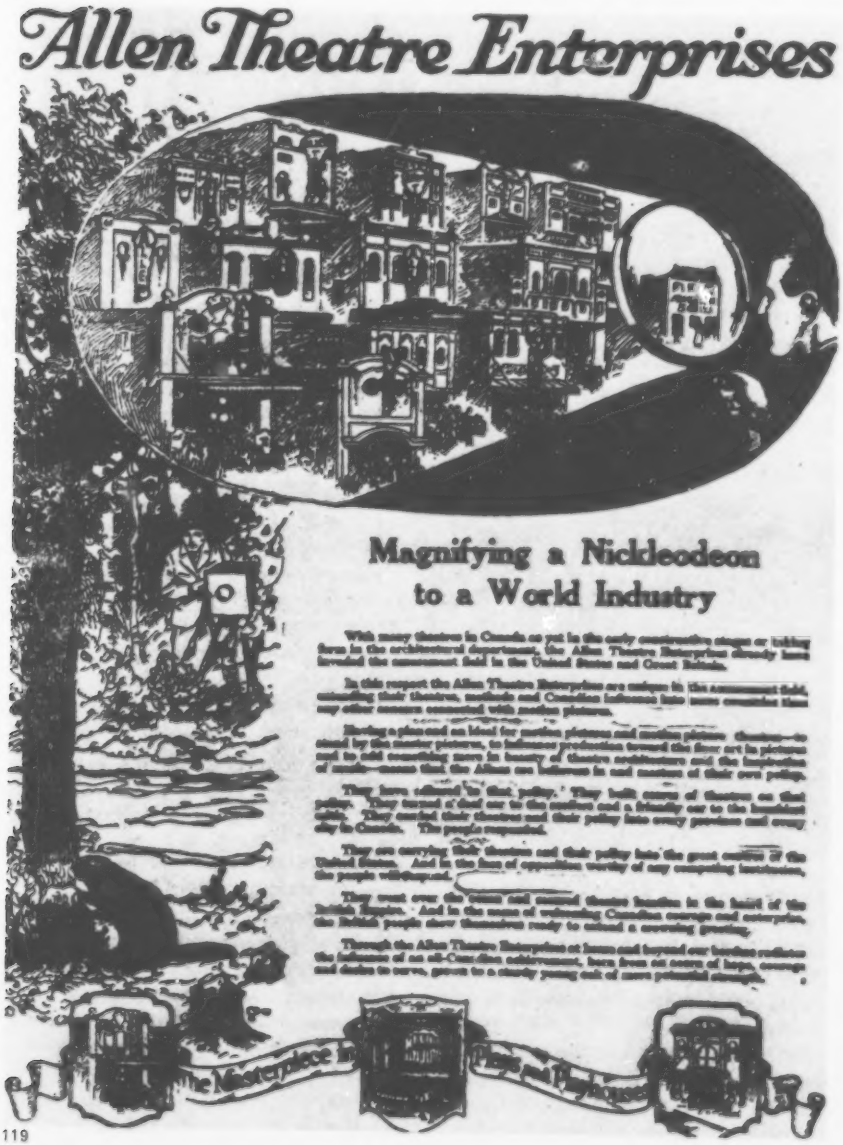
a needful warning to theatre owners to exercise eternal vigilance against any such deplorable state of affairs as exists in our fair neighbour to the north – Canada. One man there controls the distributing rights to the product of every so-called "big company" in addition to theatres in any number of key spots. The predicament of the independent producers and distributors is fraught with danger.[21]

Yet only five years before the Allens had owned the predominant Canadian theatre chain (Fig. 119). Following the transfer of the Paramount franchise, the Allens' fortunes had plummeted as those of Famous Players Canadian soared. Only a year later, Jule Allen had to deny a report that his circuit had capitulated. In 1922, the Allens were in deep financial trouble. With an array of creditors at their heels, they were forced into assignment. In February of that year an Allen spokesman had confirmed that the sale of the circuit to Famous Players Canadian had been approved by both boards of directors. The cost to Famous Players of taking over about 50 Allen theatres was reputed to be $5 million. Apparently the Famous Players Canadian offer was later withdrawn "because of alleged changes in the Allen circuit." Further extensive negotiations were embarked upon, during which First National (an American concern) and "other interests" made offers for the beleaguered circuit.[22]

By 1923 the surrender was complete. At the annual general meeting of Famous Players Canadian in December, N. L. Nathanson related that the company had paid $392,073 in cash and stocks for the assets of Allen Theatres Limited to the company's receiver, thus gaining control of about 20 theatres, and bringing the total number of theatres operated by Famous Players Canadian and affiliated companies to 64, a number without precedent for a theatre chain in Canada. In less than a year their holdings had increased to 82.[23]

But the company remained unsatisfied with its lack of the largest theatre in Ottawa. One month after the B. F. Keith takeover, it was rumoured that Keith and Famous Players Canadian were combining to operate a few houses for mutual interest, foreshadowing the combine of 1929. Nothing immediately came of this, nor of Famous Players' offer to sell its

119 Before the fall : Allen Theatre Enterprises. (*Mail and Empire*, Toronto, 28 August 1920.)



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Queen Street site. In July 1925 it purchased a large adjoining property in order to accommodate "a huge picture palace."[24]

New plans for this site were advertised every year until 1929. In 1926, it was to be occupied by a 12-storey building with a theatre "at the rear." In 1927 the circuit was going to build a legitimate theatre on the site, as Ottawa's only legitimate theatre, the Russell, had closed. In 1928 Thomas Lamb was said to be in Ottawa planning a $1,250,000 Capitol theatre. Many details were announced. It was to have only one box – a royal one – reserved for visiting members of the royal family and their Canadian representatives. Atlas construction was building the theatre, which would be permanently equipped for sound movies. Ray Tubman would manage it, and the opening was slated for January 1929. The last theatre proposed (in March 1929) was going to introduce to Ottawa an interior finished in "gorgeous Oriental style;" it was to cost $750,000 and to accommodate 2,400 patrons.[25] After the 1929 RKO-Famous Players agreement, the Queen street site was finally sold. Famous Players Canadian had achieved its goal of owning the biggest theatre in Ottawa.

About two months before on 7 March 1929, the public was informed that control of Famous Players Canadian had passed into Canadian hands, fulfilling N. L. Nathanson's longterm ambition. American shareholders were bought out although the Paramount franchise was retained.[26] Adolph

Zukor could not be counted out of the company's dealings. Though he relinquished his position as president, to "protect" the contract between Paramount and Famous Players, he became a member of a newly formed three-man voting trust. He could be outvoted by the other two members, N. L. Nathanson and I. W. Killam, the latter the principal stockholder in Famous Players Canadian.[27] Though Zukor could have retaliated by withdrawing the lucrative Paramount franchise from the Canadian company if he had been frequently outvoted, it was also to his advantage to maintain the contract with a chain in Canada which, in 1930, had a near monopoly on first-run exhibition, was afforded a substantial proportion of all revenues from theatre admissions and controlled 207 of 299 chain theatres.[28]

The corporation's publicity at the time of the voting trust agreement stressed that the company had grown steadily more Canadian as it expanded, so much so that a week before the agreement, "the only Broadway factors left in this large, many-millioned growth of a few years were two words of a name, the rentals paid for films, and the dividends to a minority of shareholders."[29] No records listing the various shareholders in the company could be found for this period. It is doubtful, however, that Zukor's hold on the company was as tenuous as that described in the previous paragraph. Though Zukor maintained effective voting control before 1929, apparently Nathanson was allowed considerable latitude in directing company policy.[30]

In the fall of 1929, Nathanson was brought down by the marshalled forces of Adolph Zukor, I. W. Killam and several of his fellow directors. They rejected his plan for an alliance with the British Gaumont company for the stated reason that it was controlled by the American Fox concern. In all accounts, Killam took at this time an especially firm and patriotic stand against the scheme. Outvoted by the voting trust who refused to place the offer before the shareholders, Nathanson resigned as managing director, his position being assumed by Arthur Cohen.[31]

Less than a year later, in August 1930, the voting trust and a majority of the company's directors and shareholders agreed to Paramount Publix' offer to exchange five shares in the Canadian company for four of its own. After the exchange, J. P. Bickell assured the shareholders that the affairs of the company would be carried on "under the same policy and the same progressive manner" as before, and the returns from dividends would be higher because of "the underlying assets of the larger company with its diversity of operation."[32] Paramount Publix assumed complete control, securing 93.786 per cent of the total issued shares. In about 1953, Paramount trimmed its holdings to 51 per cent. These shares were taken over in 1967 by Gulf and Western Corporation. *The Canadian Film and TV Weekly* attested in 1969 that Canadian investors had lost two opportunities in the last decade alone to gain control of Canada's biggest theatre-owning company.[33] Famous Players Limited now controls over 400 theatres, including the few remaining movie palaces.

Aftermath

Movie palace building continued unabated in the United States until about 1931. Seating capacities tended to increase; embellishments became more fantastic, bizarre and complex. The pinnacle was reached in 1927 with the opening of the vast, gilded Roxy theatre in New York, "The Cathedral of the Motion Pictures," with the largest and most luxurious everything in the world.

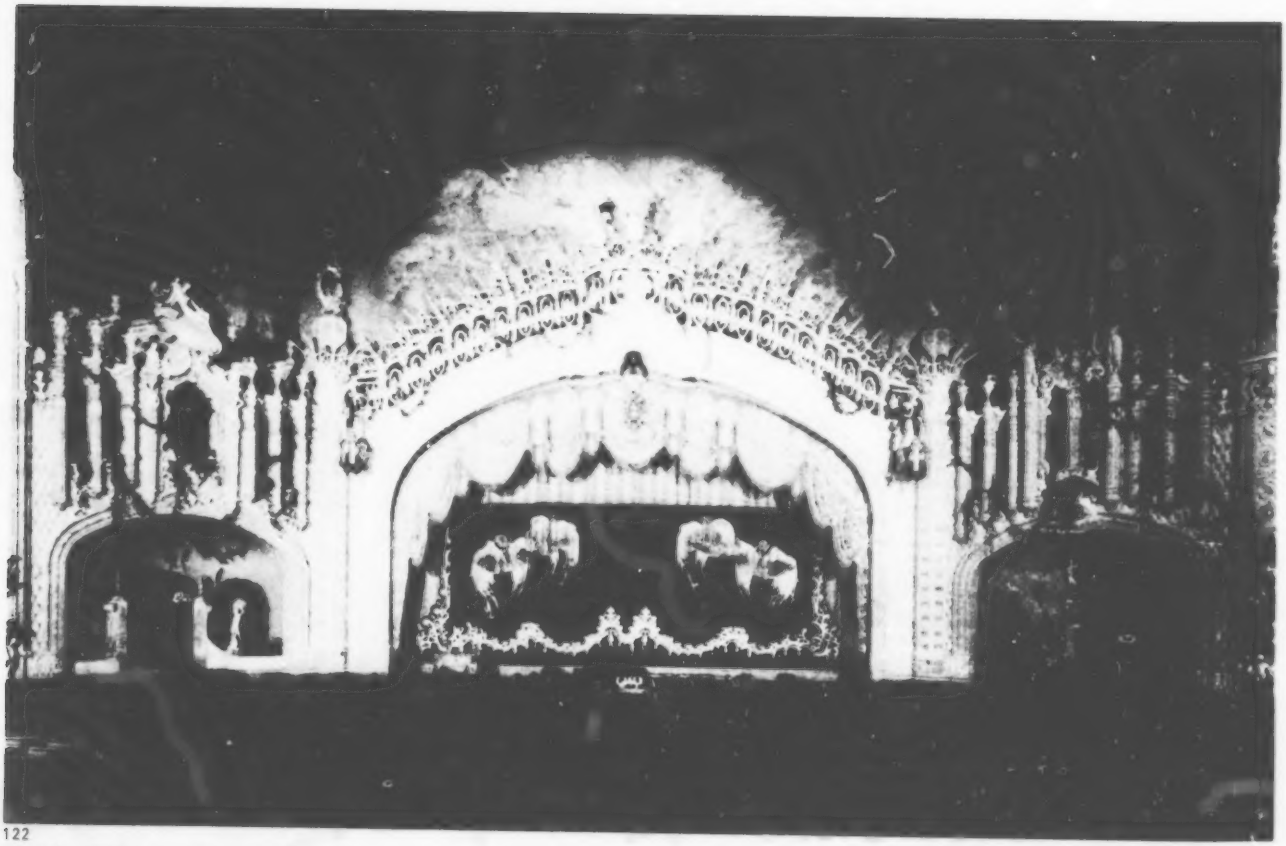
Following his Adam period, Lamb launched into heavily ornamented Italian and Louis XVI baroque designs. He explained that shortly after he had completed the Capitol in New York, he *noted a lessening of the response of the average patron to the charm of architectural backgrounds patterned after the works of the Adam brothers. There was an underlying demand for something more gay, more flashy – a development for which there is much precedent in the history of architecture.*[1]

Some examples of Lamb theatres with this inspiration were the Midland, Kansas City, Warner's Hollywood, New York and the San Francisco Fox. There are no Canadian examples of Lamb's later style.

The flamboyance of baroque styles led Lamb further afield in the late twenties to design even more fantastic Persian, Moorish and Romanesque structures. These theatres, larded with colour and plaster ornament, Lamb considered his greatest successes (Fig. 120).[2] He felt that his oriental styles were

brightly colorful, emotional and almost seductive in...wealth of color and

122 Vintage Eberson – the auditorium of the Paradise Theatre, Chicago. (*Chicago Architectural Photographing Company Collection, Theatre Historical Society.*)



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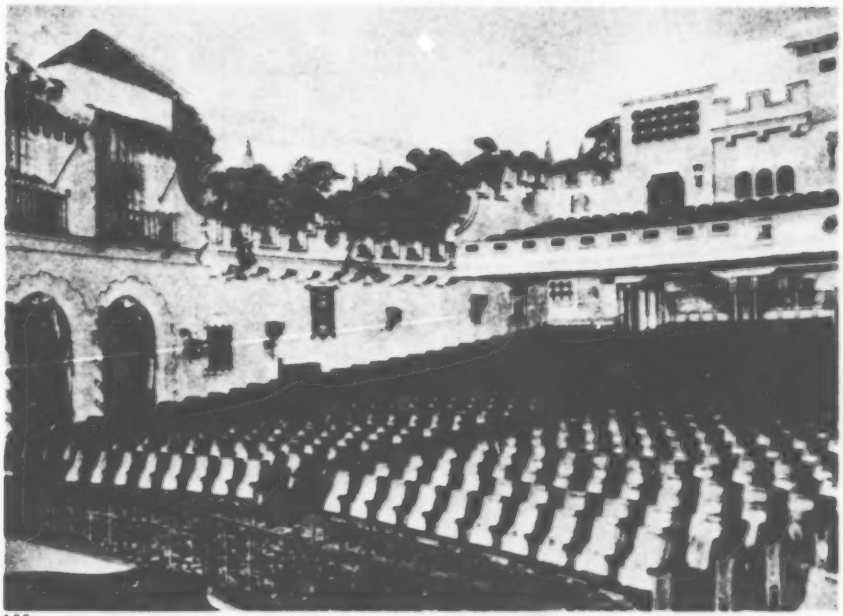
detail.... These exotic ornaments are particularly effective in creating an atmosphere in which the mind is free to frolic and becomes receptive to entertainment.[3]

In Lamb's opinion these theatres had the added bonus of imparting a knowledge to Americans of "what other nations and races have done."[4]

Lamb's oriental experiments were at least partially inspired by the exotic designs of John Eberson, a movie palace architect as prolific and influential as Lamb. Eberson devised the "atmospheric" theatre in 1922 – the ultimate in escapism. An Eberson "atmospheric" was "a magnificent amphitheatre under a glorious moonlit sky... an Italian garden, a Persian court, a Spanish patio, or a mystic Egyptian temple yard...where friendly stars twinkled and wisps of clouds drifted."[5] Its patrons had the impression of sitting under a clear, deep blue, tropical sky. Across the plaster firmament floated twinkling stars and fluffy clouds, courtesy of the Brenkert Brenograph Junior. The walls of an atmospheric

123 The Capitol in Saskatoon, an atmospheric theatre built in 1929. About half a dozen atmospheric theatres were built in Canada, mostly between 1928 and 1929. (*Theatre Historical Society*)



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theatre swarmed with arches, peacocks, pergolas, colonnades, arbutus, illuminated lattice garden houses, statues, vines and exotic foliage (Figs. 121-122). The plaster decorations were fairly standard, being supplied by Eberson's Michaelangelo Studios.[6]

Lamb was persuaded to design a number of atmospherics, but it was his opinion that "this type of work" would not endure. He objected to valuable space being used in the auditorium for effects instead of seats, and to the propensity of the three-dimensional ornamental details for gathering dust.[7] He maintained that there was very little saving in the atmospheric type of construction. Ben Hall insisted that "with all their Persian carpeted flights of fancy, they cost about one-fourth as much to build and maintain as the standard crystal and damask models."[8]

A few deluxe-sized atmospheric theatres were built in Canada (Fig. 123). A *Citizen* reviewer wrote on the 1928 opening of the Avalon, an Ottawa atmospheric on Bank and Second Avenue:

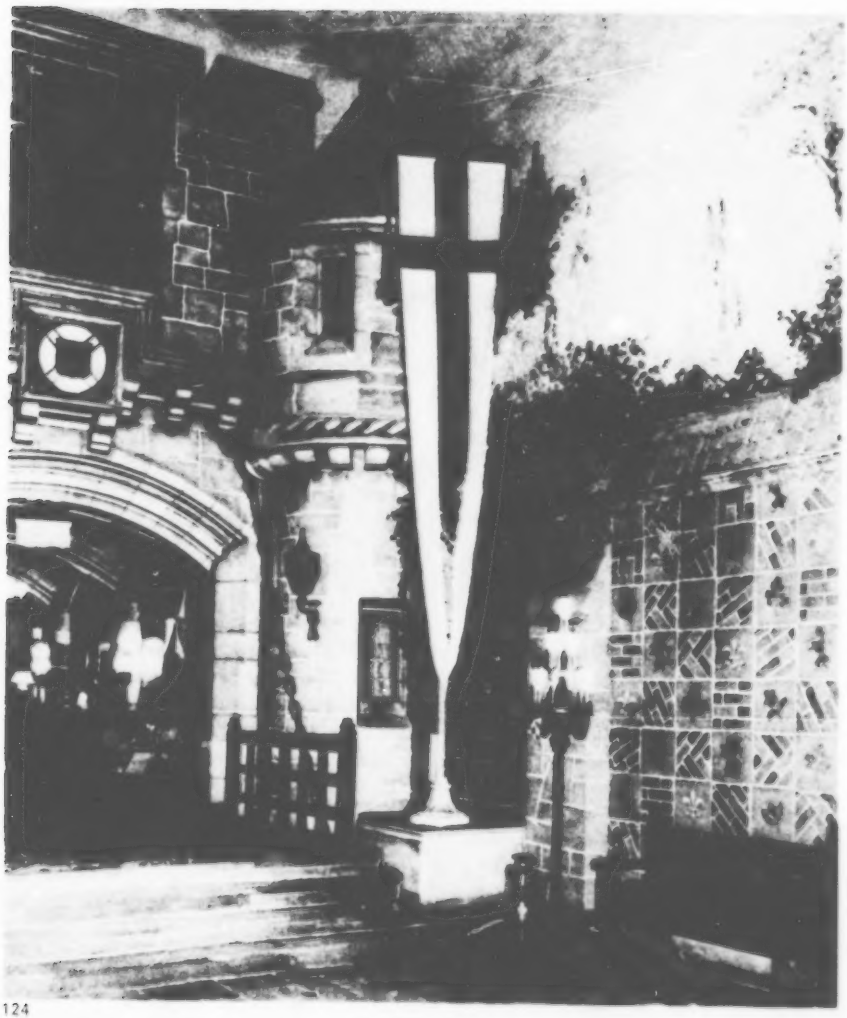
One gains the impression of being far from the noise and bustle of the capitol of Canada, tucked away in some quaint old Spanish town, listening to dreamy music while make-believe stars gleam fitfully through a sky of deepest blue, and while clouds roll lazily over the quartered moon, and doves flutter softly through the summer night.[9]

The Capitol, a fascinating exotic movie theatre whose decoration also broke the Adam-Empire mould, was opened in Halifax in 1929. In a "medieval" atmosphere of turrets, drawbridges, beamed "Tudor" ceilings and heraldic insignia and banners appeared murals of Champlain's Order of Good Cheer and Wolfe and his loyal forces besieging Louisbourg. The grand foyer of this theatre was rendered "atmospheric," while the auditorium was unmistakably "hard-topped" (Figs. 124-125).[10]

The depression roughly coincided with the end of movie palace building. Their short, spectacular reign was not so much affected adversely by dwindling box office returns,[11] as by the disruption in normal ways of raising money and a depressed construction industry.[12] And it has been stressed that the construction of movie palaces was affected by the demise of "combination vaudeville." Vaudeville's *coup de grâce* was administered by the popularity of the double feature in the late twenties.

By about 1933 the film industry was staggering under the depression and nearly every major studio was in financial trouble. In midsummer of 1933 the *Film Daily* estimated that approximately 5,000 of 16,000 regularly operated theatres in the United States were closed. " 'Deluxe' houses which charged high prices and [had] heavy overhead were particularly hard

124, 125 Grand foyer and auditorium of the Capitol theatre, Halifax, Murray Brown, architect. (*Famous Players Limited.*)



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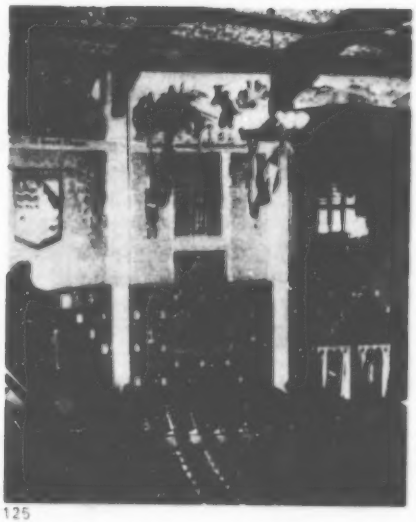

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hit."[13] The decline in movie patronage had a number of causes; the depression had deepened, and the industry was overcapitalized, overexpanded in distribution and overcompetitive in exhibition. Another cause was the poor quality of many early sound movies, which were largely exploited for their waning novelty value.[14]

Canadian exhibition was similarly affected. Like American theatres, their Canadian counterparts eventually lowered their prices. During the depression years, the Ottawa Capitol's lowest scale of admission was proffered in 1935 when matinee seats and "1,000 seats anytime" were 25 cents, the rest of the orchestra seats were 35 cents and children were admitted for 10 cents. The depression did not close the house in 1931 (as a *Journal*

article reported in May 1970). It was closed for six weeks of extensive and expensive renovations. The Capitol rarely resorted to give-away dishes, bingo and such gimmicks as adopted by other theatres to attract patronage.

The theatres built for depression and post-depression audiences reflected a new appreciation of popular taste by the exhibitors and the architects they hired. The audiences of the period, it was felt, were serious and sophisticated ; their earlier exuberance and child-like awe at the cascading grandeur of the movie palaces had been tempered by the depression. In this "hard-bitten new maturity," they supposedly found the old movie palaces vulgar, absurd, ostentatious and hopelessly passé.[15] Numerous arbiters of good taste had always found the palaces ridiculous. They were not impressed with buildings devoted to pleasing public taste and making money. They disliked the purely derivative nature of movie palace architecture and were disturbed by the mélange of architectural styles combined in one building. It seemed that the palaces were built with reckless disregard for contemporary artistic and architectural trends, and superimposed architectural styles foreign to the western tradition.[16]

The new cinemas evinced a complete reaction to the escapist and flamboyant movie palace era. Possibly, movie palace architects had run the gamut of every conceivable monumental style and had no further to go. Cinemas became resolutely "modern." *The few movie houses that were built in the mid-thirties bore a tedious resemblance to the Hall of Transport and Travel at the Chicago World's Fair. Suddenly everything was blue mirrors and chromium stair rails ; light fixtures were shards of jagged frosted glass, and cubism was espoused by the carpetmakers.*[17]

In the late 1930s and 1940s the new school of cinema architects embraced functionalism, economy, and efficiency as the greatest virtues in cinema design. Nothing should distract the patrons' interest from the screen illusion ; thus the auditorium should be a completely neutral enclosure. Flat dust-proof surfaces took the place of three-dimensional and painted ornament. Dramatic lighting was reduced to being functional and non-distracting. These architects maintained that a movie theatre should have no pretensions to look like anything else.[18] The austerity demanded almost constituted a reversion to nickelodeon days.[19]

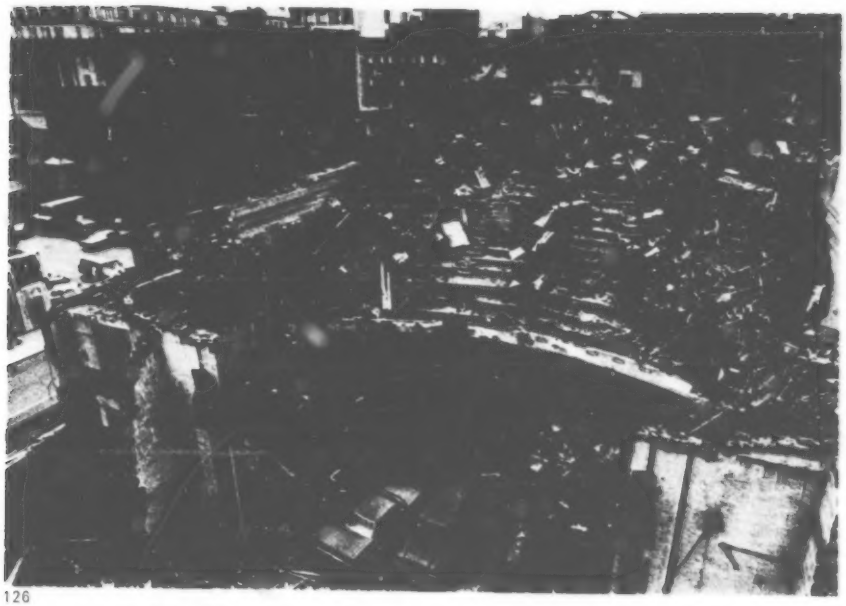
In the 1940s and 1950s, movie houses became plainer and, in general, steadily smaller, and drive-in theatres, perhaps the ultimate in plainness, proliferated, though they profited from capacities that were inconceivable to movie palace architects. New theatres marked the exodus of theatre patrons to the suburbs, the entertainment offered by small suburban theatres became similar to that of a large downtown house, and movie theatres were faced with strong competition from television.

The death knell of the movie palaces was sounded. Ottawa's Capitol survived until 1970 because, according to spokesmen for Famous Players Canadian, the corporation had made a moral commitment to maintain it until an adequate theatre for stage performances was built in the city. Then the Capitol was deprived of the rentals which had constituted a regular part of its revenue and it was demolished (Fig. 126). Like most other palaces, it was "too big, too costly to maintain and... [had] just outlived its purpose."[20]

Some movie palaces have been converted by their owners into a number of small auditoriums in order to make a profit on the site. For example, the 2,150-seat Loew's Uptown in Toronto was converted into five cinemas with a combined seating of 2,230. In 1964 it was announced that Famous Players was "actively considering" the division of the Capitol into two theatres, but this was not carried out.[21]

Famous Players estimated that it would cost at least $300,000 or $400,000 to "modernize" the building. (These figures approach the original stated construction cost.) To make "better use of the land," the company raised a 14-storey $10 million office building embracing three new theatres.[22]

26 July, 1970. The Ottawa Capitol in ruins. (*United Press International.*)



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Ernest Callenbach wrote on the devastation of the San Francisco Fox: *Confronted by an austere modern theatre, patrons hurry in and flit away afterwards; there is none of the leisurely atmosphere that we once thought of as part of the theatrical experience. By contrast the old "Fox" crawled with life: in its gargoyles, in its shifting spaces, its dramatic curtains, its impressive "mighty Wirlitzer," its intricate lighting. "When you entered the rotunda of the old 'Roxy'", said its founder and manager, Roxy, "you knew you were somewhere."*

Today's theatres are like too many of today's airports and banks and schools: they might be anywhere, hence give a curious impression of being nowhere....Hard as it may be to swallow, I submit that the "Fox" had more taste *than any of the new theatres....It had power and it had coherent purpose, and hence it was worth looking at.*[23]

So were all the palaces. They may have been overdone, fraudulent, repetitious, barbarous, vulgar and structurally dishonest, and every derogatory adjective applied to them, but they were fun, they were an *event* to visit, and unlike modern cinemas, they elicited a strong emotional response from their patrons. It is unlikely that the waves of nostalgia that surround the demolition of a movie palace will be even a ripple when a post-palace house is torn down.

The Ottawa Capitol closed amid much public sorrowing. Many people collected souvenirs, mostly because they "loved" the theatre: pieces of plaster and marble and brass railings, light fixtures, theatre seats and even the box office. A gentleman wanted to buy one of its domes. At its last performance the Capitol's patrons held hands and sang *Auld Lang Syne*.

"Last performances" have become a characteristic movie palace event. Some palaces manage to go out in a blaze of glory as their stages are brought to life for the first time in years, as enough people are attracted to rid the theatres of their mausoleum atmosphere, and as patrons cast lingering glances at their decor and furnishings. In another ten years, the Canadian movie palace may be extinct. Only a few photographs, books and articles may be left to acquaint coming generations with one of this century's most spectacular, immoderate and preposterous architectural phenomena.

Appendix: Ottawa Openings up to 1920

In 1920, the year Loew's Ottawa theatre opened, thirteen Ottawa theatres were advertising motion picture entertainment. These were: the Dominion, the Russell, the Regent the Imperial, the Family, the Centre, the Strand, the Français, the Nationale, the Casino, the Princess, the Fern and the Rex. At the time, three of these, the Dominion, the Russell and the Family, featured combined movies and vaudeville.

The Dominion, which opened as Bennett's vaudeville theatre in 1906, has already been described (*see* Fig. 12). It was the only theatre of the three that presented vaudeville for most of its life. It came to a fiery end in 1921, and was not replaced.

The 1,733-seat Russell theatre had opened in October 1997, adjoining the Russell Hotel at the corner of Queen and Elgin (Fig. 127). When it opened, Ottawa already possessed a "legitimate" theatre, the Grand Opera House, erected in 1874 at 134 Albert Street at a cost of $40,000. The Russell replaced the Grand as the hub of Ottawa's cultural life, and soon the latter was offering its red plush seats and royal box to patrons of popular price melodramas.[1] By 1909, the Grand had turned to vaudeville and movies. It burned down, together with a "nickel" theatre beside it, in 1913.

Then the Russell became the only large legitimate theatre in Ottawa. Though it had burned in 1901, it was immediately rebuilt. This theatre hosted classic stage presentations, road shows, concerts and soloists (including a portion of the Tremblay Concert Series), vaudeville, and, almost reluctantly, motion pictures. It closed in 1927 and was demolished in 1928 to make way for Confederation Square.[2]

The 1,142-seat Family theatre was built as a vaudeville house in 1910 on Queen east of Bank Street (Fig. 128). It was a fine theatre by contemporary standards; it offered a seven-piece orchestra, and its interior was decorated in "marble and tile with old rose, old ivory and Moorish tints." Its balcony was cantilevered; thus there were no obstructing pillars in the auditorium. In about 1912 vaudeville lost its pre-eminent place in the Family and, apparently, it was one of the first Ottawa theatres in which long movies were screened. But the Family had a checkered career, and at various stages of its existence offered plays and burlesque and, in addition, revived vaudeville as its premier attraction. It also acquired more names than any other Ottawa theatre, subsequently being named the Franklin, the Capital, the Galvin, and the Embassy before closing in 1932.[3]

The 1,352-seat Français theatre, opened in June 1913 on Dalhousie Street, was also built as a deluxe "combination" house, though it was soon converted to an all-picture programme accompanied by a nine-piece orchestra. It was built of reinforced concrete and was supposedly fireproof. Its interior decorations were similar to those of the Family. Both theatres were managed in 1914 by Kenneth Finlay and belonged to United Motion Pictures Theatres Limited, a consolidation of the eastern Canadian theatre interests of Mark-Brock Theatrical Enterprises, the builders of New York's Mark Strand.[4]

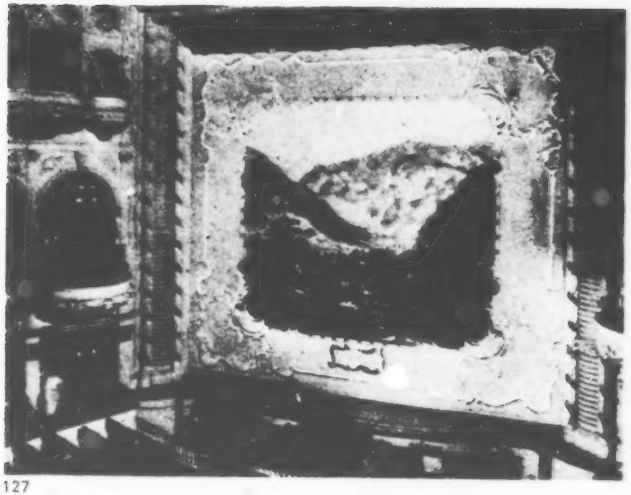
The Casino, Ottawa's only burlesque theatre at the time, had opened on Little Sussex Street (behind Union Station) in 1909. It mixed vaudeville and pictures with its girlie shows, and was remembered by Bill Gladish as an Ottawa "hot spot." The owner tried to change its name to the Majestic in 1925, but its patrons refused to recognize this innovation, and it reverted to the Casino. It was successfully renamed the Capital in 1928 when it changed its policy to an all-picture show, but (like many small theatres that did not earn large profits) it was not converted for sound movies and closed in about 1929.[5]

The Nationale (previously the Monument Nationale) was another early theatre that seems to have presented movies and stage shows. Near the Français on the corner of George and Dalhousie, this theatre seated over 700, catered to French-Canadian audiences, and was operated under the auspices of La Société du Monument Nationale. It occupied the second and third floors of a building and was surmounted by a fourth-floor billiard hall. The building was reported to have been in existence as early as 1904, but may not have contained a theatre at the time. According to Eric Minton, the Monument Nationale opened in October 1906 with a "Capitaloscope" (a fancy word for a projector) offering moving pictures and illustrated songs.[6]

It seems that about 16 store theatres were opened in Ottawa between

127 View of proscenium, asbestos curtain, boxes and orchestra pit of the Russell theatre, Ottawa. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

128 Facade of the Family theatre, Queen Street, Ottawa. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



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1906 and 1912. Because many of these were short-lived enterprises, or changed their names and ownership frequently, and often did not advertise in the newspaper, it is difficult to discover exactly how many of them were opened or their opening dates.

Similarly, it is difficult to pin down the first store theatre in Ottawa. *Moving Picture World* in 1914 and 1915 gave Ken Finlay the distinction of being Ottawa's pioneering exhibitor with his People's Theatre on Rideau Street. *The Canadian Moving Picture Digest* believed in 1919 that George C. Talbot had opened the city's first store show in 1905, but neglected to give its name or address. Eric Minton culled from the *Ottawa Journal* of September 1915 the following description of what was believed to be Ottawa's first nickel theatre.

The Unique Theatre was on Rideau Street, in a store, with little or no ventilation. It was furnished inside with wood. Its roof was all wood. The seats and everything in fact was wooden. In front were a lot of slot machines where pictures could be seen for a penny. In back the pictures on the screen were the "wild-west" kind. The better class of people would not go to a show.[7]

Among notable Ottawa store theatres were the Orpheum at Somerset and Preston, formerly a skating rink which, legend had it, could not be operated in the spring because of interruptions from flood waters; the Albert Street Nickel, whose owner (Ken Finlay) delivered sensational "Daylight Pictures" by leaving some lights on during the show; and the Star at Arthur and Somerset and St. George's on Bank between Somerset and MacLaren, both second-floor establishments distinctly dangerous in the event of panic or fire.[8]

Between 1913 and 1915, several theatres primarily dedicated to movies were constructed in Ottawa. These were for the most part considerably larger and more elaborate than their converted predecessors, and included the Flower and Centre theatres on Sparks Street, the Princess on Rideau, the Clarey and Imperial on Bank, and the Rex on Lorne Avenue. They were supplemented in January 1916 by the Regent on the corner of Bank and Sparks.

The Flower (later named the Strand) (Fig. 129) tried to maintain a "garden atmosphere," and was *a narrow elongated picture house running between Sparks and Queen*

129 Entrance and lobby display of the Flower theatre, Sparks Street, Ottawa, in April 1918. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

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[whose] walls and ceilings [were] constructed entirely of cement with a moveable roof operated on a sliding scale to expose sections of the auditorium to the sky during warm summer months.[9]

In June 1920, the theatre's summer atmosphere was reinforced by "breezy chintzes" which decorated its interior, and the "Strand Cascades," two "scenic waterfalls" in close proximity to the screen.[10]

The Flower was "next door" to the Centre theatre, latterly in business as the Mall and demolished in 1974 to make way for a squash club. The Centre accommodated a theatre organ and was built with carpet-covered rampways leading to the balcony which were held to be safer than steps.

The Princess and the Clarey were among the smallest houses of those listed. Both are still operating; the former was enlarged and substantially altered to become the Rideau theatre in 1931. The latter's name was changed

in 1919 to the Fern, and in 1931 to the Rialto.

The Imperial was built of steel and reinforced concrete and had a cantilevered balcony. It tendered a women's lounge, mezzanine and balcony boxes, the latter furnished with "artistic candelabra," and a carpeted floor at the rear of the auditorium. A black-and-gold general colour scheme harmonized with "polished gumwood" woodwork. Artistic bas-relief panels decorated the side walls, and the stage area was adorned with eight "Greek" columns and a royal purple curtain. The plaster-decorated proscenium arch was topped by a Canadian coat-of-arms surmounted by the royal crown.[11]

The Imperial, which was also controlled by United Motion Picture Theatres Limited, subscribed for most of its life to a "straight pictures" policy, and was customarily advertised in its youth as "the house with the organ." (This was reportedly a "$20,000" instrument made in Ottawa.) The theatre still stands, though substantially altered and renovated (with the help of some of the old Capitol's equipment) and is now a strip joint.

The Rex on Lorne Avenue seems to have lacked any distinction until 1927 when it was transformed into the "New Rex." The remodelled theatre was meant to resemble a "Spanish bungalow," with "Spanish interior decorations in the colour scheme and investiture." Its stage was enlarged to accommodate vaudeville or plays, and its seating capacity was increased to about 1,000.[12]

The 1,036-seat Regent was built by local businessmen, though it was early acquired by the Allen chain. It was later sold to Famous Players Canadian, and survived until 1972. The theatre had an organ, a large orchestra, and a small stage, as it was primarily intended as a movie house. Like the Imperial it boasted boxes, balcony (but one of the steepest in Ottawa), fancy plaster decorations and a proscenium arch (Figs. 130-131). Publicity before its opening judged that it was "obvious" that "in drafting the plans...the style of the Strand theatre in New York [had] been brought into many advantages."[13]

All these theatres were eclipsed when Loew's Ottawa opened on 8 November 1920, unrivalled in its seating capacity, lavish decor, chandeliered domes and its vistas of sweeping balcony, mezzanine and marble staircase. The first week of its life was one of the most exciting in the theatre's history. Plenty of advance publicity led to a sensational splatter on opening day (Fig. 132). Thirteen pages of the Ottawa *Citizen* were devoted to descriptions of the theatre and the upcoming opening ceremonies, advertisements from contractors, sub-contractors and hangers-on, together with articles relating to the movies scheduled to run in the theatre and to Marcus Loew and his works. Thomas Lamb (who was in Ottawa for the opening) notified the public in a large advertisement that he had been afforded greater pleasure in designing Loew's Theatre in Ottawa than many which had come under his supervision in larger cities because of "the tremendous scope for designing and engineering ability."

To open "Canada's $1,000,000 theatre," Marcus Loew came by train from New York with a "galaxy of movie stars." The list of stars changed with virtually every advertisement and newspaper report, both before and after their arrival, but seems to have comprised Will Morrissey, and Grace Valentine, Betty Bond, Muriel Ostriche, Lillian Walker, Gladys Leslie, "Texas" Guinan, Neysa McMein, Helen "Smiles" Davis, Maude and Marguerite Marsh, Ruth Hargrave, Margaret Beecher and Winnifred Westover. In heralding this group as "the greatest gathering of motion picture stars ever assembled at one time on the North American continent," Loew's publicity man, Terry Turner, admitted "we got away with murder."[14] Three of these stars were noteworthy chiefly because they were related to someone more famous: Marguerite and Maude Marsh were sisters of Mae Marsh (one of D. W. Griffith's leading ladies), and Margaret Beecher was the granddaughter of Henry Ward Beecher and the grandniece of Harriet Beecher Stowe.

The celebrities were met at Central Station by two Metro cameramen who filmed the event, by delegations from the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, and by crowds so enthusiastic that police were needed to hold them in check. Led by the Governor General's Foot Guards' Band and mounted police, Marcus Loew and his movie stars rode in state to City Hall where,

130, 131 Foyer and auditorium of the Regent theatre, February 1918. (*Public Archives of Canada.*) At this time, the theatre was involved in the war effort, showing patriotic dramas and displaying Allied flags. (Strangely, there does not seem to be a Union Jack among them.)

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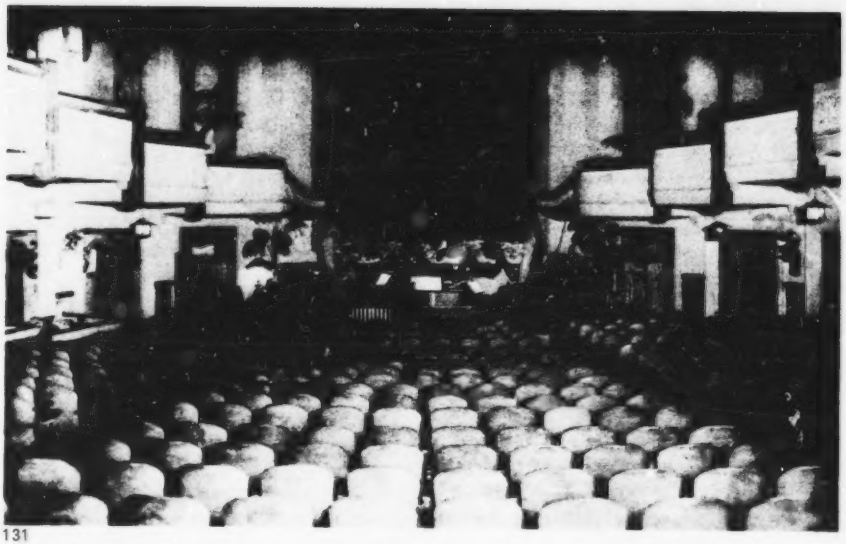
evening newspapers of 8 November reported, they were welcomed by three members of Board of Control, and the crush of spectators "exceeded anything since the reception of the Prince of Wales." The procession then travelled to the House of Commons and was greeted by Sir James Lougheed, acting Prime Minister and owner of Calgary's Grand Theatre.[15] Eight years later, a *Citizen* reporter remembered that "Texas" Guinan took the opportunity to "write a new chapter in the history of Parliament Hill" by tossing pennies to assembled youngsters.[16] The Rotary Club hosted a luncheon for the party at the Chateau Laurier, at which Marcus Loew was introduced as representing an industry "with vast potentialities for good." The cigarettes provided for the luncheon were instead donated to 80 convalescing soldiers in hospital in Ottawa.

Marcus Loew and his stars appeared on the theatre's stage at each performance. They gave little speeches expressing pleasure at the reception they had been given, sang songs and told stories and jokes. Will Morrissey performed "stunts," Neysa McMein brought one of her paintings to be auctioned for "a charity to be named," and "Texas" Guinan led the stars in singing an adaptation of "Avalon," substituting "Ottawa" where appropriate. Between each appearance by the celebrities, the patrons were entertained by D. W. Griffith's movie "The Love Flower," short subjects and a comedy picture, and five vaudeville



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acts: Fox Benson, the McNaughtons, the Texas Comedy Four, Jimmy Rosen, and Norton and Noble and a "Bevy of Girls." Even on this gala occasion, a balcony seat for a matinee cost 15 cents, orchestra seats 25 cents, and boxes and loges 35 cents. In the evenings boxes and loge seats cost 55 cents and all other seats were 40 cents.

In keeping with Mr. Loew's policy of "giving all a chance," no reserved seats were offered, except for those provided for invited guests. These included a party from Government House in which were Lady Rachel Cavendish, Captain Lloyd and Lord Richard Neville. (The latter had arranged for the Governor-General's Foot Guards' Band, and he was especially accommodated by the temporary removal of the seat in front of him, as he was suffering from a game leg.[17])

Invitations had been also sent to the mayors of Ottawa and Hull, Sir James Lougheed, and various government and service club officials. Hundreds of people were turned away at the door as there were line-ups at the theatre all day, which sometimes stretched as far as Kent Street on Queen.

The next day, the stars made well-advertised visits to various commercial establishments in Ottawa, made a tour of the city, and were received by the mayor of Hull. Marcus Loew delivered a speech in English, but noticed that the assembly did not laugh on cue. Later he chided Terry Turner for not

informing him that his audience would be largely French-speaking.[18]

The celebrities returned to the theatre to appear on stage at each performance, and on the tenth departed by train for Montreal. There they did not open a theatre but were met by enthusiastic crowds, were given a civic reception and the key to the city by Mayor Martin,[19] attended a Kiwanis Club luncheon, and were led by Professor Goulet's Famous Military Band in triumphal procession to Loew's Theatre, where they again appeared on stage.

In Ottawa the opening of the theatre was continuing to make headlines, as it had almost immediately become a subject of controversy. On 9 November the *Evening Journal* wrote that Alderman McKinley had introduced a motion of censure against Mayor Fisher and Board of Control for greeting "the motion picture people" at City Hall. The alderman was strongly supported by an anonymous Ottawan whose editorial letter was featured on the *Journal's* front page.

Of course it was not really a civic reception, but it was meant to, and did to some convey that impression. I hope that it is not true that when these people went up to Parliament Hill they were "received" by the acting Prime Minister, Sir James Lougheed, or any member of the Dominion Government ....If it is true, is there any sufficient reason why every circus which comes to the City of Ottawa should not be given a similar reception ?...I would not be surprised if Mr. Marcus Loew and his friends return to New York in the belief that they have visited the "original boob town."

The editor's reply to this letter contradicted the previous *Journal* report. According to his revision, Ottawa's official reaction was far more restrained than that of Montreal.

Visiting celebrities were not welcomed officially or otherwise, by any member of the Dominion Government when the parade found its way to Parliament Hill on Monday. Autos formed up on the sidewalk, paraders waited there for some few minutes, but no one appeared to receive them. After the delay the visitors withdrew and proceeded to the Chateau Laurier for lunch. The parade, incidentally, barely hesitated in front of the City Hall for the so-called civic reception.

On November 10, the newspapers reported that, in response to Alderman McKinley's pointed inquiries, Mayor Fisher informed the council that Board of Control did not give Marcus Loew a civic reception, that he did not know who paid for the band, and that no expenses were incurred by the city. "A gentleman" who had approached the mayor on behalf of the party had been told that the occasion did not call for a civic reception. Marcus Loew had merely "called at the City Hall with some other visitors" as anyone was at liberty to do.

A letter to the *Citizen* published on 11 November censured Alderman McKinley for questioning so promptly and publicly the propriety of "the reception," "a mere act of courtesy extended to strangers within our city." The writer praised Marcus Loew who, *unlike some of our armchair celebrities, has earned his laurels as a potent factor in bringing happiness to millions of commonplace people, making low price entertainment practical across North America.*

Apart from philanthropy, this man should always command commendation for his commercial enterprises which not only instructs and educates but affords employment to many thousands, by the erection and maintaining of numerous theatres, when same abounds to the general welfare of the masses.

Another writer whose letter was published the same day was enraged by the misuse of the Governor-General's Foot Guards' Band, in that "the uniform that Drake, Nelson and Wellington swore by, and the flag they fought for [had been] used as a vaudeville advertisement!"

The theatre was the subject of two *Journal* editorials within a week of its opening. The first on 9 November was restrained in its approval of the theatre's existence.

Can anyone say that the city and its population are the worse for it? This much is certain, that men who now go with their families to the "show" several times a week are tremendously happier and better able to attend to their work and meet the worries of every day life than they and their families would be if they spent as much time and money in the drinking bars as was spent in the old days.

132 One of eighteen *Citizen* pages devoted to the opening. (*Citizen*, Ottawa, 8 November 1920.)

LOEW'S THEATER OPENS TODAY

SECOND SECTION **The Citizen** SECOND SECTION

MOVIE STARS ARRIVE CENTRAL STATION AT 11.45 A. M.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S FOOT GUARDS BAND WILL LEAD PARADE; CAMERAMEN WILL TAKE MOTION PICTURES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

He Will Attend Loew's Opening

MOVIE STARS EXPECTED HERE TODAY

LOEW'S WILL PRESENT FIVE SUPER-FEATURES IN OTTAWA

LOEW'S STOCK SEEMS A GOOD INVESTMENT

MOVIE STARS TO PAY ONLY A VISIT

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S FOOT GUARDS BAND WHICH WILL MEET MARCUS LOEW AND MOVIE STARS AT CENTRAL STATION THIS MORNING AT 11.45

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And after all [*the low-priced theatre*] *is an excellent substitute. The surroundings are clean and artistic, the music is good and in some cases creates a taste for high class compositions and talent, much of the entertainment is educative in one way or another, and there is comparatively little of the objectionable because producers have found that that sort of thing does not pay. People who deplore the frivolous and urge that the time of men, women and children could be better occupied than in attending theatres are apt to lose sight of the fact that the theatres merely provide an opportunity for frivolity that would exist anyway and, but for them without many of the meritorious and orderly features which mark their entertainments. It is too early yet to say whether the low priced theatre is a blessing or a curse; and apparently it does not matter whether we pronounce the one* [*or*] *the other for Ottawa people have evidently made up their minds to patronize the theater whether it is a curse or a blessing.*[20]

Possibly influenced by the near scandal surrounding the theatre's opening, the second *Journal* editorial on 15 November questioned the value of the theatre as well as the "public sense of values." The people of Ottawa were willing eventually to pay up to $700,000 for a "place of cheap amusement" they would never own, "an extravagance that Ottawa could

get along without for a while," yet they were protesting against investing $3 million in general hospital buildings that would end up being owned outright by the city and would fill a need "far more important to the well being of the community than a daily bill of vaudeville and photoplay."

The editorial was more or less a variation on a letter the *Journal* had published on 12 November. *What happened to the project for a Memorial Hall? Who is to blame if Ottawa is without an auditorium where the best in music and drama could and would be interpreted by real artists? Who, indeed, is to blame, if we mistake straws for sunbeams? Could not the Ottawa money invested in the new theatre have been invested in an auditorium with more lasting results.*

The opening ceremonies were again featured in both Ottawa newspapers on 16 November, following "a lively exchange over movie actresses" during a council meeting. To charges that "the motion picture places" were responsible for much juvenile crime and the Board "fell for the painted ladies and made Ottawa the laughing stock of North America," an alderman countered that the theatre was "an admirable thing for Ottawa" and provided entertainment for the poor. Mayor Fisher remarked, "If I had seen the ladies and had known in advance what I have since heard I might not have agreed to what I did." However, he still did not concede that he had agreed to anything; he had merely informed Marcus Loew's publicity agent that "anyone was privileged to come to the City Hall."[21]

The debate seems to have withered away. But on 1 December the *Journal* published Marcus Loew's letter thanking the "wonderful gentlemen" of the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs for making the visit of the party one they would never forget. This letter could hardly have served to pour oil on troubled waters, but it did not reignite the controversy. However, the service clubs remained sufficiently embarrassed to stage their annual Christmas benefits for underprivileged children at the Russell and Dominion theatres, though, no doubt, they had planned to use the big new theatre.

According to the *Canadian Moving Picture Digest* reporter, all the public comments and criticisms were too much for the newly appointed manager, William H. Stanley, and he suffered a nervous breakdown.[22] He was replaced in December by J. D. Elms.

Nevertheless, perhaps all the fuss was worthwhile. On 9 November 1920, a *Journal* reporter commented, "the ceremonies in connection with the dedication of the house were of a character that will long be remembered by those who gained admission." Mrs. George Payne, 71 years old, told a *Citizen* reporter in May 1970, "We thought it was beautiful–glittering sequins and everything. And Hollywood actors and actresses were there for the opening."[23]

In the Beginning

1 Bosley Crowther, *The Lion's Share: The Story of an Entertainment Empire* (New York: Dutton, 1957), p. 30.

2 In June of that year, the Hollands introduced the Kinetoscope to the Pacific coast. Evidence of this was found in a 1916 article in *Moving Picture World* which described a business card treasured as a relic by a San Francisco man. The card read: Edison Kinetoscope Holland Bros; Ottawa, Canada; Foreign Agents; Represented by A. Holland
On the back was inscribed: San Francisco, June first 1894
This is to certify that Captain John F. Ryan, United States Government Diver (a Christian) was the first man who paid to see the Edison Kinetoscope west of Chicago. Signed: Holland Bros.
Moving Picture World (hereafter cited as *MPW*), Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 399. *See also* Martin Quigley, Jr., *Magic Shadows: The Story of the Origin of Motion Pictures* (New York: Quigley Publ. Co., 1960), pp. 149-50; Kemp R. Niver, *The First Twenty Years: A Segment of Film History* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Research Group, 1968), p. 14; Canada. Public Archives (hereafter cited as *PAC*), MG29, I2, Thomas Alva Edison to Holland Brothers, 1894; Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film. The Story of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry" (hereafter cited as "Canada and the Film"), *Yearbook of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry* (Toronto: Film Publications of Canada, 1951) (hereafter cited as *Yearbook*, 19—), p. 21; Hye Bossin, "At the Very Beginning. The Holland Brothers of Ottawa Ushered in the World Motion Picture Industry," *Yearbook*, 1952-53, pp. 45-49.

3 Ben M. Hall, *The Best Remaining Seats: The Story of the Golden Age of the Movie Palace* (New York: Bramhall House, 1961), pp. 12-13; Kemp R. Niver, op. cit., p. 14.

4 Dennis Sharp, *The Picture Palace and Other Buildings for the Movies* (London: Hugh Evelyn, 1969), p. 70.

5 Robert Grau, *The Theatre of Science: A Volume of Progress and Achievement in the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: Broadway Publishing Co., 1914), p. 5; Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Pictures* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1926-64), p. 264; Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History* (Columbia University: Teachers College, 1939-67), p. 5; Murray D. Edwards, *A Stage in Our Past: English-Language Theatre in Eastern Canada from the 1790s to 1914* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 160.

6 *See* Dennis Sharp, op. cit., pp. 54, 70.

7 Gilles Marsolais, *Le Cinéma Canadien* (Montreal: Editions du Jour, 1968), p. 17; Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film," *Yearbook*, 1951, pp. 21, 25; Hye Bossin, "The Story of L. Ernest Ouimet, Pioneer," *Yearbook*, 1952-53, p. 28; PAC, MG29, I2; *The Canadian Moving Picture Digest* (Toronto) (hereafter cited as *CMPD*) (1 May 1940), p. 5.

8 *MPW*, Vol. 31 (10 March 1917), p. 1498; Vol. 59 (9 December 1922), p. 529; Vol. 60 (27 January 1923), p. 328; *CMPD* (9 May 1925), p. 16; (1 May 1940), p. 6; John C. Green, "The Actual and True Story of the First Moving Pictures Ever to be Shown in Canada," *The Canadian Film Weekly* (hereafter cited as *CFW*) (26 July 1944). The day of the showing is not absolutely certain. The *Citizen* notified that the first exhibition of the Vitascope would take place on Monday, the twentieth, whereas the *Ottawa Daily Free Press* made a similar announcement for the twenty-first. The twenty-first has been chosen here as both newspapers reviewed on the twenty-second the showing of the previous night. *Ottawa Daily Free Press*, 1896, 15 July, p. 3; 20 July, p. 1; 21 July, p. 1; 22 July, p. 6; *Citizen* (Ottawa), 1896, 20 July, p. 8; 21 July, pp. 2, 8; 22 July, pp. 2, 8.

9 National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin manuscript on the history of the Canadian motion picture industry; *see also CMPD* (1 May 1940), p. 5.

10 National Film Board Library, Montreal, op. cit. Schuberg did not consistently claim that he had invented the black tent. In a 1948 interview with a *Vancouver Daily Province* reporter, Schuberg related that he had *bought* a black tent sometime around 1901. Gordon McCallum, "From Dime Flickers to Gold Trail," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 31 January 1948.

11 *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), pp. 368-69.

12 B. S. Brown, " 'Hale's Tours and Scenes of the World'," *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 372. In another 1916 *Moving Picture World* article, Epes Winthrop Sargent maintained that Hale's Tours was "an adaptation of an old amusement park device which consisted of a condemned street car, mounted on rollers, and a double panorama, one for each side of the car. When the car was filled, the wooden rollers would be started, giving the effect of motion while the patrons looked out on either side to see the fleeting panorama." E. W. Sargent, "New York City Holds Record for Earliest Exhibiting," *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 370. Other sources have assumed that Hale came up with a novel idea. *See* Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., p. 7; Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith, *The Film Till Now: A Survey of World Cinema* (London: Vision, 1949), p. 71.

13 Not much detail could be found on these installations. J. D. Williams, later an Australian theatre magnate and organizer of First National and British International Film Productions at Elstree, did a thriving business on Cordova Street, Vancouver, with Hale's Tours, which he ran in connection with a Mutoscope arcade. In Winnipeg, Hale's Tours was established at 626 Main Street, later the site of the Starland Theatre. E. C. Thomas, "Vancouver, B.C. Started with 'Hale's Tours' in 1905," *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 373; B. S. Brown, op. cit., p. 372.

14 The 1907 Starland in Montreal further titillated passers-by by locating its *glass* projection booth over the ticket office in full view of the street. Unfortunately, no further details were given on this unusual installation. *MPW*, Vol. 1 (19 October 1907), p. 522; Ian Cameron, "The Movie Palace: Its Rise and Fall," *Sunday Times Magazine* (London), 21 March 1965, p. 24; George C. Pratt, *Spellbound in Darkness, Readings in the History and Criticism of the Silent Film* (Rochester: Univ. of Rochester, 1966), Vol. 1, pp. 40, 43, 140; Benjamin B. Hampton, *A History of the Movies* (New York: Covici Friede, 1931), pp. 9, 45; Elmer George Kiehler, "Motion Picture Tendencies from an Architect's Point of View," *MPW*, Vol. 53 (3 December 1921), p. 1600.

15 Russel Nye, *The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1970), p. 363; Sidney S. Cohen, "The Exhibitor's Place in the Sun" (reprinted from *Exhibitor's Herald*), *CMPD* (6 December 1924), p. 10; *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 368; Vol. 43 (10 January 1920), p. 247.

16 "Recollections of the Days When the Infant Industry was Cutting Teeth," *MPW*, Vol. 55 (11 March 1922), p. 212.

17 *MPW*, Vol. 86 (18 June 1927), p. 533.

18 Colin S. Collins, "Theatres Old and New," *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 316.

19 Ibid.; F. H. Richardson, "Projection Then and Now," *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), pp. 329-30; "When Nickelodeons Were All the Rage and Showmen Periodically Went Broke," *MPW*, Vol. 60 (27 January 1923), p. 330; *CMPD* (15 October 1921), p. 13; (1 May 1940), p. 19.

20 Other slides available to exhibitors in 1909 included, "Don't spit on the floor. It spreads disease," "Our pictures are always moral and clean," and "Kindly remove your hats." *MPW*, Vol. 5 (25 December 1909), p. 925.

21 "Recollections of the Days When the Infant Industry was Cutting Teeth," *MPW*, Vol. 55 (11 March 1922), p. 212; *MPW*, Vol. 55 (11 March 1922), p. 214.

22 Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 30; Harry S. Marvin, "Illustrated Songs," *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), pp.331-32; "The Nickelodeon," *MPW*, Vol. 1 (4 May 1907), p. 140; Bosley Crowther, op. cit., p. 29. Slide exchanges were formed as the illustrated song became an integral part of the moving picture programme. Three of the 17 views available in 1907 to illustrate the song "No One Knows How Much I Miss You" were: 1—Interior, with loving couple seated on couch; 7—Garden scene with female bending over drooping flower bush, as though telling them of her loneliness and seeking their sympathy; and 16—Summer arbor with female sitting on rail lost in reverie. *MPW*, Vol. 1 (9 March 1907), p. 14.

23 Colin S. Collins, op. cit., p. 316.

24 George C. Pratt, op. cit., p. 246; Raymond Fielding, ed., *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television: An Anthology from the Pages of the Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967), p. 11; Kevin Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone By* (New York: Knopf, 1968), pp. 10-11.

25 Adolph Zukor and Dale Kramer, *The Public is Never Wrong: The Autobiography of Adolph Zukor* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953), p. 51.

26 It should not be assumed, however, that the nickelodeon type of building for the movies completely disappeared with the advent of the movie palace. The editor of *The Canadian Moving Picture Digest* complained at the end of 1917 that there were "still many places showing pictures . . . that are about as comfortable and artistic as a vault in a cemetery." *CMPD* (24 November 1917), p. 5.

27 The term "vaudeville theatre" did not appear until 1881, though American theatres had begun to present variety acts in regular performances in the 1840s. In those days, their audiences were predominantly male and the acts were mostly suggestive. By the 1880s, "vaudeville was easily the most popular form of theatrical entertainment;" its audience was the middle-class family and its acts were emphasized as "clean" and "refined." Russel Nye, op. cit., pp. 167-68.

28 Joe Laurie, Jr., *Vaudeville: From the Honky-Tonks to the Palace* (New York: Holt, 1953), p. 346.

29 Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., p. 7; *see* Gordon McCallum, op. cit., for a reproduction of the 1903 programme which also announced, "Admission 10¢. Chairs Free." The Electric and Edison Electric are most frequently isolated by secondary sources as the pioneering movie theatres in the United States and Canada. They may not have been, but it is practically impossible to prove otherwise. Documentation is sparse, as five-cent theatres rarely advertised in the press. Nevertheless, the motion picture industries in both countries have celebrated the golden anniversaries of the movie theatre based on the opening dates of these two western theatres. Hye Bossin, "They Led the Way. The Motion Picture Industry Marks the Golden Anniversary of the Silver Screen," *Yearbook*, 1953-54, p. 19; *see also* "From Nickel Theatorium to Movie Goer's Mecca," *Telegram* (Toronto), 7 November 1952, p. 3.

30 Hye Bossin, "The Movies Come to Vancouver," *CFW*, Vol. 28 (24 April 1963), p. 4; *CMPD* (1 May 1940), p. 11.

31 Schuberg developed a circuit of movie theatres in Winnipeg, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana. His circuit continued to expand until 1919 when he sold his interests in theatres in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo to the Allen chain. *CMPD* (1 May 1940), p. 11; *MPW*, Vol. 40 (21 June 1919), p. 1782. For more information on the Allen chain, *see* "Zenith – The Palaces," and "The Circuits."

32 Harris and Davis' Nickelodeon was earning over $1,000 profit per week soon after the opening, showing Edwin S. Porter's "The Great Train Robbery" to 96 seated patrons and many others standing from 8 A.M. to midnight. Cf. Ian Cameron, op. cit., p. 24; Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 12; Terry Ramsaye, op. cit., p. 426; Harold B. Franklin, *Sound Motion Pictures – From the Laboratory to Their Presentation* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), p. 296; *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 405.

33 Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 54-55; National Film Board Library, Montreal, op. cit.

34 George C. Pratt, op. cit., p. 40.

35 National Film Board Library, Montreal, op. cit.; Hye Bossin, "The Cinema Comes to Toronto, I, II," *CFW*, Vol. 28 (22, 29 May 1963), pp. 12, 6; *see also* David Cobb, "Who Remembers the Theatorium's Nickel Movies?" *Toronto Star*, 20 November 1965.

36 Hye Bossin, "In Those Days X-Rays were More Popular," *Toronto Star*, 8 June 1963, p. 19; Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film," *Yearbook*, 1951, p. 30. The 1936 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Canada* erroneously dates the Theatorium opening as March 1896, and calls Griffin "the father of motion picture houses in Canada." *Moving Picture World* reported that Griffin's first theatre was the Lyceum (later the Crystal Palace) at 141 Yonge, but from about 1940 on, Griffin insisted that the Theatorium (later the Red Mill) came first. The Griffins' other Toronto theatres were the Hippodrome (later the Rialto) at 219-21 Yonge; the Trocadero (later the Maple Leaf); the Auditorium (later the Avenue and the Mary Pickford) and the Variety, all on Queen Street West, and the Lyric, a converted church on the corner of Agnes and Terauley, illustrated in J. S. Woodsworth's book, *My Neighbor*, as an example of modern degeneracy. William Stewart Wallace, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Canada* (Toronto: University Associates of Canada, 1936), Vol. 4, pp. 343-46, "Motion Picture Industry;" *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), pp. 410-11; *CMPD* (1 May 1940), p. 6; J. S. Woodsworth, *My Neighbor* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1972), p. 105.

37 *CFW*, Vol. 28 (10 April 1963), p. 4.

38 Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film," *Yearbook*, 1951, pp. 31-32.

39 National Film Board Library, Montreal, op. cit.

40 "Opening of New Theatre," *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1906, p. 5. Moving pictures had been shown sporadically in Ottawa since John C. Green's exhibition of Edison equipment in July 1896. A contemporary account noted in 1904, "Moving Pictures is the order of the night this summer. So many thousands go nightly to Britannia that the road is taxed to the limit." Anson A. Gard, *The Hub and the Spokes, or The Capital and its Environs* (Ottawa: Emerson Press, 1904), p. 87.

41 Programme, Bennett's Theatre, Ottawa, 8 April 1907, in PAC Library.

42 *CMPD* (1 January 1921), p. 5; Hye Bossin, "The Story of L. Ernest Ouimet, Pioneer," *Yearbook*, 1952-53, pp. 28-37; Cinémathèque Canadienne, *Hommage à M. L. Ernest Ouimet* (Montreal: Cinémathèque Canadienne, 1966), pp. 2-3.

43 Cinémathèque Canadienne, op. cit., pp. 3-6; Edgar Andrew Collard, "All Our Yesterdays – Montreal's First Real Movie House," *Gazette* (Montreal), 28 April 1962, p. 6; Gilles Marsolais, op. cit., p. 1; National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin papers on the history of the Canadian motion picture industry, Ouimet to Bossin, 31 January, 12 May 1952; Walter O'Hearn, "60 Years of Motion Pictures in Montreal," *CFW*, Vol. 28 (10 July 1963), p. 7.

44 National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin papers, Ouimet to Bossin, 31 January 1952; George C. Pratt, op. cit., p. 43. Ouimet's judgement that his cinema was the first that could be called "deluxe" was corroborated by a 1927 article in *Moving Picture World* which, while conceding that Lubin had built "what probably was the first really elaborate structure intended for picture exhibition," opined that he "was never a showman and his houses were conducted in accordance with the general slovenly practice of that day." *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 340.

45 F. C. Koenig, "The Moving Picture Theater," *MPW*, Vol. 8 (11 April 1911), p. 762.

46 Dennis Sharp found that "essentially the cinemas in the period 1910-1914 were decorated fronts with corrugated-iron halls behind . . . . The special treatment given to the frontages evolved directly from the fairground booths and biograph shows." Dennis Sharp, op. cit., pp. 8, 55.

47 *MPW*, Vol. 5 (20 November 1909), p. 713. According to Russell Merritt, nickelodeons adapted the "gingerbread architecture" of their more respectable predecessor, the vaudeville theatre. Russell Merritt, "Nickelodeon Theatres," *American Film Institute Report*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (May 1973), p. 6.

48 *MPW*, Vol. 1 (19 October 1907), p. 522; Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 340. Pressed steel was later available to cover interior walls and ceilings though *Moving Picture World* cautioned an inquiring exhibitor in 1911 that "nine times out of ten . . . the selection of patterns displays execrable taste, running too much to 'gingerbread.' Also nine times out of ten the steel is not well put on and . . . the effect is not at all good." *MPW*, Vol. 8 (1 April 1911), p. 713.

49 *MPW*, Vol. 7 (5 November 1910), p. 1051.

50 Hye Bossin, "The Movies Come to Hamilton," *CFW*, Vol. 28 (26 June 1963), p. 6; Samuel A. Peeples, "Films on 8 & 16," *Films in Review*, Vol. 22, No. 10 (December 1971), p. 642.

51 In order not to interfere with the projection of a picture, light sources were concealed and their illumination was thrown by reflectors on the theatre's walls and ceilings. Painted appropriate light colours such as matte white, cream or ivory, these surfaces became the effective sources of diffused light. *MPW*, Vol. 10 (14 October 1911), pp. 115-16; Vol. 77 (19 December 1925), pp. 710-11.

52 *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 316; Vol. 5 (30 October 1909), p. 599.

53 E. C. Thomas, op. cit., p. 375; Elmer George Kiehler, op. cit., p. 1600; *MPW*, Vol. 6 (30 April 1919), p. 679.

54 *MPW*, Vol. 14 (5 October 1912), p. 49.

55 *MPW*, Vol. 8 (3 June 1911), p. 1302.

56 A. Nicholas Vardac, *Stage to Screen: Theatrical Method from Garrick to Griffith* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), p. 215. Feature-length movies began to gain popularity about 1912. Multi-reeled films had appeared about 1909 but were not welcomed by exhibitors, who managed to get around the problem long films created in small theatres by exhibiting one reel at each showing. Terry Ramsaye, "Motion Pictures – History," in Encyclopaedia Britannica, *The Theatre and Motion Pictures: A Selection of Articles from the New 14th Edition of The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (New York: 1933), p. 24.

57 To see "Quo Vadis?" at the Astor Theatre in April 1913 cost $1.50. A. Nicholas Vardac, op. cit., p. 211.

Zenith – The Palaces

1 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 39.
2 Ibid., p. 106.
3 Ibid., p. 31.
4 Ibid., pp. 31-35, 105-06; W. Stephen Bush, "The Theater of Realization," *MPW*, Vol. 18 (15 November 1913), pp. 714-15; Vol. 18 (20 December 1913), pp. 1401-02.
5 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 40; W. Stephen Bush, "Opening of the Strand," *MPW*, Vol. 20 (18, 25 April 1914), pp. 371, 502.
6 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 38.
7 Ibid., pp. 39-40.
8 *MPW*, Vol. 7 (12 November 1910), p. 1097; Vol. 7 (31 December 1910), pp. 1522-23; Vol. 22 (21 November 1914), p. 1049.
9 First-run films had previously not been shown in any theatre accessible to its patrons, and would not be shown again for some time thereafter. The palaces provided prestige bookings for such films, and established their reputations with the critics and the public. Charles P. Skouras, "The Exhibitor," in Gordon S. Watkins, ed., *The Motion Picture Industry*, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 254 (November 1947), p. 28.
10 Arthur Knight and Eliot Elisofon, *The Hollywood Style* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), p. 19.
11 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 12.
12 *See* Edward Bernard Kinsila, *Modern Theatre Construction* (New York: Chalmers Publishing Co., 1917), p. 57; David Robinson, *Hollywood in the Twenties* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1968), p. 27.
13 Ian Cameron, op. cit., p. 29.
14 Thomas W. Lamb, "Good Old Days to These Better New Days," *Motion Picture News*, Sect. 2 (30 June 1928), p. 37.
15 Quoted in Ben M. Hall, op. cit., pp. 136, 93.
16 S. L. Rothafel, "The Architect and the Box Office," *Architectural Forum*, Vol. 58 (September 1932), p. 194.
17 *MPW*, Vol. 31 (17 February 1917), p. 1025; Vol. 18 (20 December 1913), p. 1400.
18 A *Gazette* reviewer at the opening noted, "Just what the advance in the art of moving picture production means was brought home to a large and fashionable audience at the St. Denis." "Splendid Theatre Opened its Doors," *Gazette* (Montreal), 4 March 1916, p. 9.
19 *MPW*, Vol. 35 (23 February 1918), p. 1101.
20 *Gazette* (Montreal), 4 March 1916, p. 9. The theatre may have been redecorated between 1916 and 1918 in an attempt to attract patrons.
21 *MPW*, Vol. 35 (23 February 1918), p. 1101; *see also CMPD* (3 August 1918), p. 8; (19 October 1918), p. 8.
22 *MPW*, Vol. 25 (28 August 1915), p. 1467.
23 Ibid., Vol. 25 (25 September 1915), p. 2165; Vol. 28 (15 April 1916), p. 454; *Gazette* (Montreal), 4 March 1916, p. 8.
24 *MPW*, Vol. 32 (23 June 1917), pp. 1293-94.
25 National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin manuscript; Hye Bossin, "The Movies Come to Calgary," *CFW* Vol. 28 (1 May 1963), p. 6; *MPW*, Vol. 41 (2 August 1919), p. 647; Vol. 74 (30 May 1925), p. 525.
26 Loew's Yonge Street, remodelled, is still operating. The Wintergarden has been closed for over 40 years, and except for acquiring layers of dust and losing most of its furnishings, it remains unaltered. Both Shea houses have been demolished. One of the Hippodrome's seats would seem to have been worth saving – reportedly each was equipped with a chocolate bar dispenser. Hye Bossin, "The Cinema Comes to Toronto, II," *CFW*, Vol. 28 (29 May 1963), p. 6; Raymond Hill, "Last Curtain for Shea's Tonight," *Telegram* (Toronto), 27 December 1956, p. 3; Stan Helleur, "Farewell to Shea's," *Mayfair*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (March 1957), pp. 23-25, 61-63.
27 *Civic Theatre Magazine*, Vol. 1, Nos. 4-5 (January-February 1946); Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film," *Yearbook*, 1951, p. 36.
28 "New Regent Theatre is well Appointed," *Mail and Empire* (Toronto), 25 August 1916, p. 6.
29 *MPW*, Vol. 28 (10 June 1916), p. 1927; Vol. 35 (26 January 1918), p. 553.
30 "Formal Opening of Regent Theatre," *Mail and Empire* (Toronto), 26 August 1916, p. 4.
31 *MPW*, Vol. 29 (16 September 1916), p. 1874.
32 Hye Bossin, "The Cinema Comes to Toronto, I," *CFW*, Vol. 28 (22 May 1963), p. 13.
33 National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin papers, Bossin to "John," 12 June 1964.
34 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 17.
35 *MPW*, Vol. 35 (26 January 1918), p. 553.
36 *MPW*, Vol. 34 (29 December 1917), p. 1952.
37 *See* "Allens Now Predominate in Canada," *MPW*, Vol. 40 (21 June 1919), p. 1782; "Les Théâtres Allen," *Le Panorama*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 1919), pp. 40, 58.
38 Their most fabulous theatre was built in the United States – the 3,500-seat Allen in Cleveland, Ohio, opened in February 1921. Crane was also slated to be the architect of a 4,000-seat Allen in Detroit and two Allen movie palaces in London, England. These plans were not carried out; by 1922 the circuit was reeling from the effects of overexpansion coupled with its loss of the Canadian distribution rights for Paramount and Select pictures. (*See* "The Circuits" for more information on the Allens' demise.) *MPW*, Vol. 41 (2 August 1919), p. 647; Vol. 74 (30 May 1925), p. 52; *CMPD* (3 June 1920), p. 21; (26 March 1938), p. 10.
39 *See* Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 81.
40 In all, Lamb drew up plans for well over 300 theatres. As well as in the United States and Canada, they appeared in India, Australia, Egypt, England and South Africa. Obituary, *New York Times*, 27 February 1942.

"Lamb and Adam"

1 Many architects copied Lamb's style, as he was a pioneer in the field of movie palace architecture. Thus a theatre may not be immediately identifiable as Lamb's work, though it may bear many of the characteristics which became his trademark.
2 Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 74.
3 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 106.
4 Robert is usually afforded all the credit for the development of the style. James Lees-Milne, *The Age of Adam* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1947), p. 15.
5 Laurence Turner, *Decorative Plasterwork in Great Britain* (London: Country Life, 1927), p. 23.
6 Sacheverell Sitwell, *British Architects and Craftsmen* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1945), p. 147. This tendency provoked Horace Walpole to refer to Adam's work as "filigreed to puerility," and his ornament as "gingerbread and snippets of embroidery" (Sitwell, loc. cit.). *See also* James Lees-Milne, op. cit., p. 83; A. E. Richardson and H. Donaldson Eberlein, *The Smaller English House of the Later Renaissance 1660-1830. An Account of its Design, Plan, and Details* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1925), p. 31; Arthur T. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam (1758-1794)* (London: Country Life, 1922), Vol. 1, p. 76.
7 Damie Stillman, *The Decorative Work of Robert Adam* (London: Tiranti, 1966), p. 2.
8 Ibid., p. 28. Adam was assisted by a group of able decorative artists who contributed panel paintings to his interiors – principally Cipriani, Antonio Zucchi and Angelica Kauffmann.
9 Sherrill Whiton, *Elements of Interior Design and Decoration* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1951-53), p. 271; A. E. Richardson and H. Donaldson Eberlein, op. cit., p. 31.
10 A. J. H. Richardson, pers. comm.; Sherrill Whiton, op. cit., p. 271.
11 Sherrill Whiton, op. cit., pp. 270-71; James Lees-Milne, op. cit., p. 167.
12 A. J. H. Richardson, pers. comm.; Talbot F. Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1944), pp. 13, 55.
13 Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 360-61.
14 Thomas W. Lamb, op. cit., p. 29.
15 Ibid., p. 31.
16 Lamb is credited with designing the downstairs theatre, therefore almost certainly he was the Wintergarden's architect.
17 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 113.
18 These colours were consistent with Adam decor, and were recommended as those that best created the impression that the theatre was cool in the summer and warm in the winter. P. Dodd Ackerman, "The Besetting Evil of Over-Elaboration in the Decoration of Picture Theatres," *MPW*, Vol. 49 (30 April 1921), p. 939.
19 Thomas W. Lamb, op. cit., p. 33.
20 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 94.

Building a Movie Palace: The Capitol

1 *See* Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 8.
2 J. R. Leathart, "Structure and Facing," *Architect's Journal*, Vol. 82 (7 November 1935), p. 13.
3 Terry Turner, pers. comm.
4 As early as 1913 Marcus Loew had proclaimed his intention of building a theatre in Ottawa. *MPW*, Vol. 17 (19 July 1913), p. 302.
5 J. R. Leathart, op. cit., p. 13.
6 Ibid, pp. 13-14; Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 162; Arnold Whittick, *European Architecture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Crosby Lockwood & Son, 1953), Vol. 2, *The Era of Functionalism 1924-1933*, p. 188.
7 P. M. Abbott, "Equipment Used for Motion Pictures," in Clyde L. King and Frank A. Tichenor, eds., *The Motion Picture in Its Economic and Social Aspects*, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 128, No. 127 (November 1926), p. 41.

8 Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 162.
9 R. Atkinson, "The Design of the Picture Theatre," *Royal Institute of British Architects, Journal*, 3rd ser., Vol. 28 (June 1921), pp. 449-50.
10 Ibid., p. 442.
11 Richard Kressin and Theo Jung, pers. comm.; William Millar and George P. Bankart, *Plastering Plain and Decorative* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1927), pp. 136-37.
12 Courtney C. J. Bond, *City on the Ottawa* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965-67), p. 118. This impression might be gained because there are many identical motifs in Lamb's theatres. As well, another major movie palace architect, John Eberson, owned Michaelangelo Studios, which mass-produced decorations for the theatres he designed. Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 100.
13 Ernest Emerling, pers. comm.
14 Earl Felber, an expert movie palace plasterer, remembered, "The architect did all the design, every cornice . . . every flute. We had to make the molds from his drawings, cast them and put them up." He further remarked, "I always liked the Adams style, it had lots of class . . . fine detail, and fits small places," Don Stott, "The Man Who Plastered the Roxy," *Marquee*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1971), p. 2.
15 The process of gelatine moulding has been known since about 1850. Gelatine moulds were made by pouring hot gelatine through funnels into a case in which the plaster model had been placed, and allowing the gelatine to set. William Millar and George P. Bankart, op. cit., p. 217.
16 One ornament retrieved from the Capitol is fibrous plaster with a cheesecloth backing. Another of similar size is solid plaster.
17 William Millar and George P. Bankart, op. cit., pp. 152, 241-43; Charles F. Balmer and Co., *The Balmer Catalogue of Interior and Architectural Art* (Toronto: Balmer, 1970), p. 2; Architectural Decorating Co., *Book of Designs Plastic Ornaments* (Chicago: Architectural Decorating Co., 1928), p. 8.
18 Fred Balmer and Theo Jung, pers. comm.; William Millar and George P. Bankart, op. cit., p. 244.
19 It also helped to bring about the movie palace's downfall by contributing to heavy maintenance costs. Plaster decorations provided a multitude of dust-catching surfaces, and were expensive to repair and repaint in the lean days of the movie palace.
20 Another method of producing a scagliola column, but which may not have been in use in 1920, was to dip and gently roll the plaster feature in a large vat of water into which oil colours had been poured. When the whole circumference had been treated, the column was varnished. Richard Kressin, pers. comm.
21 James McGuire, pers. comm.
22 G. T. Green, pers. comm.; *see* F. N. Vanderwalker, *Interior Wall Decoration* (Chicago: Frederick J. Drake & Co., 1924), p. 331.
23 Fred Balmer and Clark Green, pers. comm.
24 Ian Cameron, op. cit., p. 29.

The Capitol:
Equipment and Decoration

1 Of course, the most luxurious seats in the house were in the boxes and loges. In 1937, the theatre chairs in the balcony loges had upholstered spring seats and upholstered backs in cut velvet. The boxes offered "side chairs" with leather-cushioned spring seats. PAC, MG28, III2, pp. 18, 19, Inventory of Capitol Theatre equipment, 1937.
2 "Movie Stars Arrive Central Station at 11:45 A.M." (hereafter cited as "Movie Stars"), *Citizen* (Ottawa), 8 November 1920, p. 22.
3 In 1953 a modern air-conditioning system together with an "$80,000 underground electrical plant" were installed. *Ottawa Journal*, 27 March 1953, p. 23.
4 Richard Kressin, pers. comm.; W. H. Lee, "How an Architect Views the Problem of Theatre Ventilation, Cooling and Heating," *MPW*, Vol. 46 (30 October 1920), p. 1306.
5 W. H. Lee, op. cit., p. 1306; E. M. Garfield, "How One Ventilating Engineer Views His Problem as Applied to Theatres," *MPW*, Vol. 48 (1 January 1921), pp. 114, 116; Charles Gilbert Reinhart, "Halls of Illusion," *Saturday Evening Post*, Vol. 201, No. 45 (11 May 1929), p. 169.
6 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., pp. 201-02.
7 The *Citizen* wrote in 1920, "Designed, painted and constructed by Canadians, the scenery and stage furnishings at Loew's will be a distinct treat. The design is along the modern art line and affords a brilliant relief from the dignified surroundings of the auditorium." "Movie Stars," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 8 November 1920, p. 22.
8 *MPW*, Vol. 24 (5 June 1915), p. 1613; Vol. 73 (11 April 1925), p. 569. Loew's Ottawa does not seem to have presented this type of prologue.
9 Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 70; *see also* Frank Cambria, "Evolution of Presentation in Motion Pictures," *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 321; *MOW*, Vol. 83 (25 December 1926), pp. 604-05.
10 P. Dodd Ackerman, "Matter of Stage Embellishment as Vital as Adept Embellishment of Auditorium," *MPW*, Vol. 50 (7 May 1921), pp. 39-40.
11 *MPW*, Vol. 25 (28 August 1915), p. 1467.
12 *CMPD* (3 May 1920), p. 27.
13 *See* Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 200.
14 The 1937 inventory included a "set of cyclorama gold curtains, 48 x 20' backdrop, 2– 20' x 20' side legs." PAC, MG28, III2, p. 38. This does not seem to be consistent with Ben Hall's description of a cyclorama as a "plain canvas drop painted a rich blue and slightly curved; when properly lit this would simulate an outdoors sky." Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 200.
15 Harold Burris-Meyer and Edward C. Cole, *Theatres and Auditoriums* (New York: Reinhold, 1964), pp. 20, 146-47.
16 *See* S. L. Rothafel, op. cit., p. 193.
17 It is worth noting that Robert Adam was not renowned for his facades. In most cases, he received commissions to redecorate or complete the work of another architect. The façades he designed were given ponderous architectural treatment based on Burlingtonian precedents.
18 With this arrangement, movie palace owners had to buy or rent only a small lot of prime commercial space for the entrance and lobby, the bulk of the building being located on less expensive property behind the main thoroughfare. *See MPW*, Vol. 53 (3 December 1921), p. 602.
19 Thomas W. Lamb, op. cit., p. 37.
20 "Movie Stars," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 8 November 1920, p. 22.
21 More ponderous references to the arts could be found in the Hamilton Tivoli, opened in 1924. Its lobby was decked with busts of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Sir Walter Scott, Beethoven, Liszt, Brahms and Mozart. In addition, its patrons could reflect on these artists' connection with bronze statues of Augustus Caesar and Minerva in the auditorium. *MPW*, Vol. 70 (18 October 1924), p. 641.
22 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 15 August 1931, p. 22.
23 Especially in the late 1920s it was not unusual for movie palace architects to jumble their decorative styles. One of Lamb's theatres built in 1931, The Triboro, had a "Mayan – or Aztec front," a "Spanish-looking inner lobby," "a high French Grand Foyer, done in the true Lamb style," and an auditorium done as "an Italian garden setting." *Marquee*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February 1970), p. 2.
24 One movie palace architect confided, "The proper furnishing of [waiting] rooms eliminates the undesirable making use of [them]." R. L. Simmons, "Theatre Lobbies, Waiting Rooms, Foyers – Their Planning and Their Furnishings," *MPW*, Vol. 67 (26 April 1924), p. 765.
25 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 27 August 1924, p. 8.
26 Ibid.; "Movie Stars," 8 November 1920, p. 22; *CMPD* (4 September 1920), p. 62; "3,000 Present at Capitol Opening," *Gazette* (Montreal), 4 April 1921, p. 8. Such descriptions often are not to be taken literally. The theatres and their components were usually made out to be more expensive and "authentic" than they actually were.
27 "3,000 Present at Capitol Opening," *Gazette* (Montreal), 4 April 1921, p. 8; *CMPD* (1 March 1921), p. 21; *MPW*, Vol. 43 (14 February 1920), p. 1067.
28 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 15 August 1931, p. 22.
29 "Movie Stars," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 8 November 1920 p. 22.
30 *See Citizen* (Ottawa), 15 August 1931, p. 22.
31 It could, however, still be seen from the auditorium.
32 "Movie Stars," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 8 November 1920, p. 22.

Sound

1 For example, the reviewer of Galli Curci's concert at Loew's Ottawa in 1921 wrote, "The excellence of the acoustics properties of Loew's theatre was favourably commented upon by all who attended." *Ottawa Journal*, 22 May 1921, p. 10.
2 Theo Jung, pers. comm.; *see also* R. Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 445-46.
3 In 1922, the Allen (later the Metropolitan) in Winnipeg employed two distinct permanent orchestras – a concert orchestra conducted by Charles Manning and a jazz orchestra under the baton of Harold Green. The two alternated for features and comedies as well as for special concert performances. *MPW*, Vol. 54 (4 February 1922), p. 485.
4 Kevin Brownlow, op. cit., p. 338.
5 *See CMPD* (30 December 1930), p. 9.
6 Hugo Reisenfeld, "Music and Motion Pictures," in Clyde L. King and Frank A. Tichenor, eds., op. cit., p. 59; Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 144.
7 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 180; *CMPD* (18 May 1918), p. 15.

8 *MPW*, Vol. 35 (2 March 1918), p. 1243.
9 Kevin Brownlow, op. cit., p. 338.
10 Louis Reeves Harrison, "Is Vodeveal Necessary?" *MPW*, Vol. 8 (11 April 1911), p. 758.
11 George C. Pratt, op. cit., p. 42.
12 Reginald Foort, *The Cinema Organ* (Vestal, N.Y.: Vestal Press, 1970), pp. 40, 49.
13 Church organs had been tried at first, but were found mournful and wanting. Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 184.
14 Ibid., p. 183; *CMPD* (20 April 1918), p. 15.
15 Reginald Foort, op. cit., pp. 11, 14-18.
16 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 185. The contacts in the Capitol organ were brass with platinum tips.
17 Reginald Foort, op. cit., pp. 2, 5-6, 9-10, 53, 78-9, 82; *see also* Clarence E. Sinn, "Sixty-Four Instruments in One," *MPW*, Vol. 29 (15 July 1916), p. 458.
18 Reginald Foort, op. cit., pp. 50, 61-62.
19 STOPLIST OF THE 2/10 WARREN THEATRE ORGAN, CAPITOL THEATRE, OTTAWA, as taken directly from the console by G. Paterson, September, 1969.

Pedal

Bass Drum	8' Diapason Phonon
Snare Drum	8' Violincello
Crash Cymbal	8' Tuba
Tympony Cymbols (*sic*)	Solo to Pedal Accompaniment to Pedal
16' Bourdon	
8' Flute	

Accompaniment

Snare Drum	Harp
Castanets	Chimes
Tambourine	Tremolo
Tom-Tom	

Solo

8' Diapason Phonon	Tremolo
8' Tibia Clausa	Chimes
8' Horn Diapason	Xylophone
8' Quintadena	4' Vox Humana
8' Viol d'Orchestre	8' VoxHmana
8' Salicional	8' Tuba
4' Violin	4' Zart Flute
4' Octave	4' Flute
4' Flute	8' Salicional
4' Zart Flute	8' Viol d'Orkhestre
2' Piccolo Mixture	8' Quintadena
16' Bass Tuba	8' Tibia Clausa
8' Tuba	8' Open Diapason
4' Tuba	Solo to Accompaniment
8' Vox Humana	

5 Adjustable combination pistons for Solo manual, 3 for accompaniment.
Warren Unit Pipe Organ
2 manuals 10 ranks
Built by Warren & Son Ltd.
Woodstock, Ontario. "Organ builders since 1836" It was written up as a $40,000, 3-manual concert pipe organ, holding at least 300 combinations of tone. "Movie Stars," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 8 November 1920, p. 22. The Imperial in Toronto, by contrast, had a 4-manual, 27-rank Warren organ. *CFW*, Vol. 28 (6 March 1963), p. 4.
20 Possibly Loew's had bigger plans, but ran out of money for this organ.
21 Robert Laverty, pers. comm.
22 *See* John A. King, "Talking Pictures," *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 343; *see also* the 1908 advertisement for the "Picturephone" ("Here It Is! Singing and Talking Moving Pictures"), *MPW*, Vol. 2 (11 January 1908), p. 31.
23 Raymond Fielding, ed., op. cit., p. 18; Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith, op. cit., p. 428; Benjamin B. Hampton, op. cit., p. 383; Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., p. 298; Adolph Zukor and Dale Kramer, op. cit., pp. 49-50.
24 Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith, op. cit., pp. 429-30; *see also* Paul Michael et al., *The American Movies Reference Book, The Sound Era* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 20.
25 PAC, MG28, III31, Vol. 2, fol. 5, D. B. Stapleton to First National, 25 January 1929. The Palace in Montreal was the first Canadian theatre to be permanently equipped for sound movies. They made their Canadian debut on 1 September 1928.
26 "Sound vs. Musicians," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 6 October 1928, p. 21.
27 "Musical Extravaganza 'Syncopation' is First Photophone Feature at Keith's," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 27 April 1929, p. 38.
28 For explanations of these complex processes of sound reproduction and the history of their development, *see* Raymond Fielding, ed., op. cit., pp. 174-204; *see also* James R. Cameron, *Motion Pictures with Sound* (New York: Cameron Publishing Co., 1929), pp. 185-224.
29 Dennis Sharp, op. cit., p. 102.
30 Ibid.
31 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. iii (from Bosley Crowther's introduction).
32 Stages did not disappear until the mid-thirties, and "even then, a small stage, or what might be better called a platform, might be retained but without a gridiron above it." Ben Schlanger, "Motion Picture Theaters," in Talbot F. Hamlin, ed., *Forms and Functions of Twentieth-Century Architecture* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1952), Vol. 3, *Buildings for Residence, for Popular Gatherings, for Education, and for Government*, p. 448.

The Circuits

1 Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 419-21; Raymond Fielding, ed., op. cit., p. 187; Harold B. Franklin, op. cit., p. 13; Philip French, *The Movie Moguls: An Informal History of the Hollywood Tycoons* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 19; Bosley Crowther, op. cit., p. 135.
2 *CMPD* (17 December 1927), p. 5; (3 March 1928), p. 7; (26 May 1928), p. 13; (8 December 1928), p. 7; (8 June 1929), p. 12. For the rest of the theatres involved in this arrangement, *see* Report of Commissioner (Peter White, K.C.), *Investigation into an Alleged Combine in the Motion Picture Industry in Canada* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1931), pp. 98-9.
3 *See* Leo C. Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1941), p. 62.
4 Time-Life Books, *This Fabulous Century: Sixty Years of American Life* (New York: Time-Life, 1969), Vol. 3, 1920-1930, p. 106; Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., p. 290; Bosley Crowther, op. cit., p. 124; Gilbert Seldes, *Movies for the Millions: An Account of Motion Pictures, Principally in America* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1937), p. 89.
5 G. T. Green, pers. comm.
6 The boom was a response to Famous Players-Lasky's challenge in the exhibition field. Bosley Crowther, op. cit., p. 41; Gertrude Jobes, *Motion Picture Empire* (Hamden: Archon, 1966), p. 226.
7 Following a triple merger in 1924, the studio became Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
8 In the late twenties, after some of the smaller chains had capitulated, many of the major circuits apparently realized that, instead of continuing the costly war, it was more advantageous to reach agreements between certain competitors. Mergers, like the RCA-FBO-Keith-Orpheum-Famous Players Canadian agreement, were the order of the day. *See MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 340; Time-Life, op. cit., p. 106.
9 *See* Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film," p. 32; *CMPD* (1 August 1919), p. 24; (9 July 1927), p. 42.
10 *MPW*, Vol. 40 (7 June 1919), p. 1482; Vol. 41 (28 June 1919), p. 194.
11 *MPW*, Vol. 43 (14 February 1920), p. 1071; *see also CMPD* 1 May, 1940), p. 9. J. P. Bickell was the vice president, and N. L. Nathanson remained managing director. On the first board of directors there were two Americans, Zukor and H. D. H. Connick, and eight Canadians, Bickell, Nathanson, Sir Herbert Holt, I. W. Killam, W. L. Pitfield, W. D. Ross, W. J. Sheppard and J. B. Tudhope. National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin papers.
12 Angus MacCunn, pers. comm.; *MPW*, Vol. 43 (14 February 1920), p. 1071.
13 *MPW*, Vol. 43 (14 February 1920), p. 1071; *CMPD* (1 May 1940), p. 9; National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin papers; *CFW*, Vol. 29 (24 June 1964), pp. 1, 4. Beaverbrook's biographer does not refute this. In fact, he quotes from a condescending letter Beaverbrook wrote to Killam in 1935 as an example of "the domination he continued to exert over those who had served him even when he had ostensibly relinquished financial control." A. J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 79.
14 *MPW*, Vol. 43 (20 March 1920), p. 1975.
15 *CMPD* (1 April 1921), p. 8.
16 Ibid. (26 April 1924), p. 4; Douglas Gilbert, *American Vaudeville: Its Life and Times* (New York: Dover, 1940), p. 384.
17 Robert Grau, *The Stage in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Broadway Publ. Co., 1912), Vol. 3, pp. 15, 142; Bernard Sobel, *A Pictorial History of Vaudeville* (New York: Bonanza, 1961), p. 67; Russel Nye, op. cit., p. 170; *MPW*, Vol. 85 (26 March 1927), p. 414.
18 Ottawa shareholders in the former Loew's theatre evidently were not bought out at the time of the sale. Ottawa Theatres Limited operated the theatre until 1926, when financial difficulties forced its sale to B. F. Keith's of New York. Preferred shareholders were awarded a return of about $20 a share, while holders of common stock lost their investments. *CMPD* (27 March 1926), p. 5; *MPW*, Vol. 79 (3 April 1926), p. 1.
19 *MPW*, Vol. 61 (28 April 1923), p. 908.

20 *CMPD* (23 May 1925), p. 10. Likewise, the *Digest* overlooked the subsidiary aspect of B. F. Keith's of Canada and Ottawa Theatres Limited in making the complaint in 1926, "Keith's Canadian Theatre, Ottawa, Sold to American Company," (*See* n. 18 above) *CMPD* (27 March 1926), pp. 3, 5.
21 William Marston Seabury, *The Public and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 29, n.
22 National Film Board Library, Montreal, Hye Bossin papers; *CMPD* (22 December 1923), p. 42; *MPW*, Vol. 50 (7 May 1921), p. 42; Vol. 54 (18 February 1922), p. 713; Vol. 54 (25 February 1922), p. 817; Vol. 56 (3 June 1922), p. 463.
23 *MPW*, Vol. 62 (23 June 1923), p. 638; Vol. 65 (29 December 1923), p. 805; *CMPD* (15 December 1923), p. 42.
24 *MPW*, Vol. 75 (25 July 1925), p. 398.
25 *MPW*, Vol. 82 (16 October 1926), p. 428; *CMPD* (30 June 1928), p. 11; (6 April 1929), p. 13.
26 In addition to his $100,000 investment, Zukor had sunk $650,000 originally paid for the Paramount franchise into the Canadian company. According to Ray Lewis, *Digest* editor, "When the debentures were paid off, and the stock split 4 for 1, Mr. Zukor received his $650,000, and this left his investment . . . not over $100,000." PAC, MG26, K, Series F, Vol. 452, fol. 586653, Ray Lewis to R. B. Bennett. In March 1929 he received $8 million for his stocks. They were sold to the Canadian public for $51 a share in voting trust certificates. *CMPD* (26 April 1930), p. 10; (3 May 1930), p. 10; (16 March 1929), p. 10.
27 *CMPD* (26 April 1929), pp. 10-15; (7 December 1929), p. 10.
28 Peter White, op. cit.; PAC, MG26, K, Series F, Vol. 452, fols. 286688-9. This domination of Canadian exhibition caused Famous Players Canadian to be investigated and subsequently charged under the Combines Investigation Act in 1931. The case did not affect the company's operations, and was dismissed by an Ontario court.
29 *CMPD* (26 April 1930), p. 10.
30 Angus MacCunn, pers. comm.; *see CMPD* (3 May 1930), p. 14.
31 *See CMPD* (26 April 1930), p. 10. Nathanson later returned as president of the Paramount Publix controlled company.
32 Ibid. (26 April 1930), p. 18.
33 *CFW*, Vol. 34 (12 November 1969), p. 1.

Aftermath

1 Thomas W. Lamb, op. cit., p. 33.
2 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., pp. 113-15.
3 Thomas W. Lamb, op. cit., p. 41.
4 Ibid., pp. 41-42.
5 Ben M. Hall, op. cit., p. 96. Eberson's atmospherics were perhaps not entirely without precedent. He may have remembered that many exhibitors in temperate climes had presented moving pictures in open-air theatres between about 1910 and the end of the Great War. Except for the absence of roofs, these "airdomes" generally resembled most of the 5 cent theatres of the time. Obviously, there were very few of these in Canada, as they exposed their patrons to inclement weather and could not be darkened for picture projection before the sun set on a summer evening. *See MPW*, Vol. 8 (11 February 1911), p. 305; Vol. 17 (5 July 1913), p. 46; Vol. 25 (21 August 1915), p. 1344.
6 Ben M. Hall, "The Best Ree-Maining Seats," *American Heritage*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (October 1961), p. 105.
7 Thomas W. Lamb, op. cit., pp. 33-35.
8 Ben M. Hall, *The Best Remaining Seats: The Story of the Golden Age of the Movie Palace* (New York: Bramhall House, 1961), p. 100.
9 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 16 November 1928, p. 15.
10 The theatre's architect, Murray Brown, a Canadian, designed many medium-sized theatres for Famous Players Canadian Corporation.
11 In 1930, the profits of Paramount Publix were $18 million, the highest in corporation history. An advertisement blurted in March 1932, "NO MONEY – yet New York dug up $89,931 in four days to see *King Kong*." Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., p. 422; *see* Adolph Zukor and Dale Kramer, op. cit., p. 261.
12 Theo Jung, pers. comm.; Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith, op. cit., p. 432; Eric W. Hounsom, "An Approach to Canadian Theatre Design," *Journal, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (April 1947), p. 114.
13 Lewis Jacobs, op. cit., p. 423.
14 Ibid., p. 95; Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith, op. cit., p. 432.
15 *See* Ben M. Hall, "The Best Ree-Maining Seats," *American Heritage*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (October 1961), p. 105.
16 *See* George C. Pratt, op. cit., p. 362; Arnold Whittick, op. cit., p. 190; P. Morton Shand, *Modern Theatres and Cinemas* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1930), pp. 17, 22.
17 Ben M. Hall, "The Best Ree-Maining Seats," *American Heritage*, Vol. 12, No. 6, (October 1961), p. 105.
18 German cinema designers in the twenties had devised "functional" and "untraditional" movie theatres, most likely under *Bauhaus* influence. *See* P. Morton Shand, op. cit., pp. 22, 24.
19 *See* Helen M. Stote, ed., *The Motion Picture Theater* (New York: Society of Motion Picture Engineers, 1948), pp. 6, 21; Talbot Hamlin, ed., op. cit., p. 462; Ben Schlanger, "Building Type Study No. 143. A New Architecture for the Movie Theater," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 104, No. 5 (November 1948), p. 122.
20 *Ottawa Journal*, 7 January 1971, p. 9. In 1963, the average attendance at Capitol movie shows was 350 a day. PAC, MG28, III2, manager's report, 31 August 1964.
21 "Losing Concert Stage?" *Citizen* (Ottawa), 3 July 1964.
22 "High Rise Building to Replace Capitol," *Ottawa Journal*, 24 July 1969, p. 5.
23 Ernest Callenbach, "Temples of the Seventh Art: Notes on Cinema Design," *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Winter 1965-66), p. 14.

Appendix: Ottawa Openings up to 1920

1 Lucien Brault, *Ottawa Old and New* (Ottawa: Ottawa Historical Information Institute, 1946), p. 292; Murray D. Edwards, op. cit., p. 181.
2 Courtney C. J. Bond, op. cit., p. 117; *CMPD* (29 March 1919), p. 6; *Citizen* (Ottawa), 27 June 1967, p. 52.
3 *MPW*, Vol. 19 (21 February 1914), p. 951; Lucien Brault, op. cit., p. 292; Eric Minton, "Nickelodeon Days. When the Movies Came to Ottawa," *Ottawa Journal*, 28 October 1967, p. 35.
4 *See MPW*, Vol. 20 (18 April 1914), p. 371. The Company's president, Mitchell M. Mark, and its managing director, Henry J. Brock, hailed from Buffalo, New York, but there were three Canadians on the board of directors when it incorporated: Harry Brouse of Ottawa, and Edward Cronyn and Sir Henry Pellat of Toronto. (Pellat built Toronto's Casa Loma.) *MPW*, Vol. 19 (24 January 1914), p. 391; Vol. 19 (21 February 1914), p. 951; Vol. 24 (24 April 1915), p. 596; Eric Minton, op. cit., p. 35.
5 Eric Minton, "Burlesque Mob Carried Doors Away," *Ottawa Journal*, 14 September 1971, p. 70A; *Citizen* (Ottawa), 27 June 1967; p. 52; W. M. Gladish, "Nostalgic Memories of the Early Theatres," *Citizen* (Ottawa), 17 February 1947, p. 12.
6 Eric Minton, "Nickelodeon Days. When the Movies Came to Ottawa," *Ottawa Journal*, 28 October 1967, p. 35; W. M. Gladish, op. cit., p. 12; *Citizen* (Ottawa), 27 June 1967, p. 52.
7 Eric Minton, "From Tent-Show to Television," *Habitat*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1969), p. 20; *MPW*, Vol. 19 (21 February 1914), p. 951; Vol. 24 (24 April 1915), p. 596; Vol. 25 (17 July 1915), p. 532; *CMPD* (25 January 1919), p. 6.
8 W. M. Gladish, op. cit., p. 12. St. George's was converted in 1918 to the "Wintergarden," a combination movie theatre and dance hall. Pictures were screened at one end of the hall, a "gallery" was provided for seated patrons at the other end, and the dance floor was established in between. *CMPD* (16, 30 November 1918), pp. 9, 6.
9 *CMPD* (23 April 1949), p. 10; Courtney C. J. Bond, op. cit., p. 118. One of the theatre's managers took pleasure in remembering years later the confusion that ensued one night when the crank for the sliding roof would not work and the audience was exposed to a sudden rainstorm. *CMPD* (1 May 1940), p. 19.
10 *MPW*, Vol. 43 (12 June 1920), p. 1493.
11 *MPW*, Vol. 24 (8 May 1915), p. 911.
12 *CMPD* (12 November 1927), p. 9.
13 *MPW*, Vol. 25 (17 July 1915), p. 532. While there were few architectural resemblances between the Strand and the Regent, the comparison attempted reveals that the Strand was considered a prototype by the Regent's publicity agent.
14 Terry Turner, pers. comm.
15 *See MPW*, Vol. 74 (16 May 1925), p. 283.
16 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 23 June 1928, p. 31. By this time, "Texas" Guinan had become notorious as a speakeasy hostess.
17 Terry Turner, pers. comm.
18 Ibid.
19 It was reported that the mayor had been kissed by "Texas" Guinan, but he later denied this. *CMPD* (Christmas Issue, 1920), p. 40.
20 A "prohibitionist" took issue in a letter to the editor with the argument that low-priced theatres provided a substitute for the bar. "There is seldom a vaudeville programme presented in which prohibition is not sneered at, and booze held up as man's chief solace. . . . Why should theatres, indirectly endeavour to restore that which involves possible loss of revenue?" *Ottawa Journal*, 11 November 1920, p. 6.
21 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 16 November 1920, p. 12.
22 *CMPD* (Christmas Issue, 1920), p. 40.
23 *Citizen* (Ottawa), 1 May 1970, p. 3.

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Table Glass Excavated at Beaubassin, Nova Scotia

by Jane E. Harris

Canadian Historic Sites
No. 13

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Abstract
Approximately 200 glass objects, mostly bottles for wine, snuff or medicine, were recovered from the Acadian townsite of Beaubassin, Nova Scotia. The settlement was occupied by the French from the 1670s to about 1750, and by the British from the 1750s to the early 1800s. The French occupation is represented by fragments of bottles, tumblers and stemware bowls; the British period by bottles, a small amount of plain stemware and a decanter stopper.

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Sommaire
En 1968, la Direction des parcs et lieux historiques nationaux du ministère des Affaires indiennes et du Nord canadien a fait effectuer, sous la direction de M. Pierre Nadon, des travaux de prospection archéologique près d'Amherst en Nouvelle-Écosse, afin de retrouver l'ancien établissement acadien de Beaubassin (fig. 1). L'équipe de M. Nadon recueillit alors quelque 200 objets de verre dont certains dataient du régime français (des environs de 1670 à 1750) et les autres du régime anglais (des années 1750 au début des années 1800). Le présent rapport traitera des objets de verre recueillis en plus ou moins grande quantité dans six des huit unités fouillées (1, 2, 3, 4, 7 et 8).

L'étude de ces artéfacts a été faite en fonction des périodes d'occupation et des types d'objets plutôt qu'en fonction des unités de fouille. On a soumis les tessons provenant d'articles de table à une lumière ultraviolette à ondes courtes (modèle UVS. 11 de la *Fisher Scientific Company*) pour déceler la présence de plomb dans la composition du verre. Le code de couleurs utilisé fut le *Nickerson Color Fan* de la *Munsell Color Company*.

La collection comprend quatre types d'objets de verre appartenant sans doute à la période acadienne, et notamment des bouteilles à vin globulaires, des bouteilles en forme de "pots de fleur", des bouteilles utilitaires vert-bleu et des vaisseaux de verre blanc sans plomb. On a groupé ensemble quatorze tessons provenant d'au moins six bouteilles à vin globulaires qui dataient de la fin du XVII[e] et du début du XVIII[e] siècle (fig. 2). Seize tessons furent classés dans la catégorie des bouteilles à vin vert olive en forme de "pots de fleurs" finies dans un moule monocoque. Il y avait aussi plusieurs tessons vert-bleu représentant deux formes de bouteilles, une à côté plat, probablement à panse carrée, et l'autre à panse cylindrique. La collection ne contenait que quatre tessons de verre blanc dont deux provenaient de bols à pied, un d'un bord décoré de gobelet et le dernier d'un gobelet gravé.

La partie anglaise de la collection comptait des bouteilles à vin vert olive foncé, des fioles, des flacons à tabac à priser, des fioles à médicaments et des articles de table en verre au plomb. Il y avait entre 12 et 20 bouteilles à vin cylindriques de la période 1750-70 (fig. 3) et peut-être 12 autres bouteilles de la période 1770-1800 (fig. 4 et 5) représentées par 34 tessons. Quarante-et-un tessons provenaient d'au moins six fioles (fig. 6 et 7*a*) et quatre flacons à tabac à priser (fig. 7*b*). Enfin, il y avait des tessons d'un flacon de *Balsam of Life* de Turlington (fig. 8) et d'une fiole verte cylindrique (fig. 9*a*). Quant aux cinq autres bouteilles de la collection, il fut assez difficile de déterminer leur usage. Cependant, deux d'entre elles auraient pu être fabriquées aux États-Unis au XIX[e] siècle (fig. 9*b*). Les tessons de verre au plomb de cette période provenaient de verres à vin à pied uni, de verres à pied pour toasts et d'un bouchon de carafe, soit d'un maximum de 16 pièces.

D'après le verre qu'on y a recueilli, on aurait mis au jour dans l'unité de fouille 1, les vestiges d'une construction anglaise qui avait été érigée sur l'emplacement d'une ferme acadienne

abandonnée. Cette unité a fourni un bon échantillon de verre anglais, mais seulement sept tessons susceptibles d'être attribués à la période acadienne. De même, les unités 2 et 3 donnèrent proportionnellement plus de verre anglais que de verre français et, partant, auraient servi d'emplacements à des constructions habitées par les Anglais après 1750. L'unité 4 a été éliminée de la chronologie à cause du trop petit nombre de tessons de verre qu'on y a récupéré. En revanche, les unités 7 et 8 ont donné des preuves presque concluantes d'une occupation acadienne antérieure à 1750.

L'étude des artéfacts de verre a comporté leur comparaison aux pièces de céramique trouvées à Beaubassin. D'après l'analyse du verre, on obtient l'ordre chronologique suivant des unités de fouille : 1, 3, 2, 7 et 8, en allant du plus récent au plus ancien, tandis que les céramiques donnent un ordre dans lequel les deux premières unités sont interverties et cela à cause de l'absence de céramiques françaises dans l'unité 3.

La quasi-absence de verre dans la période acadienne et sa relative abondance dans la période anglaise s'explique sans doute par les facteurs sociaux et commerciaux suivants. Au début du XVII[e] siècle, les objets de verre étaient moins nombreux, plus chers et disponibles dans une gamme plus restreinte qu'au cours de la deuxième moitié de ce même siècle et les Acadiens menèrent une vie plus austère que les Anglais qui ont de plus entretenu des contacts plus étroits avec l'Angleterre que les Acadiens avec leur mère patrie.

Introduction

Historical Background

The name "Beaubassin" at first referred to the whole Isthmus of Chignecto, but gradually it came to be used only for the small Acadian village which was situated on the southwest end of the Fort Lawrence ridge near present-day Amherst, Nova Scotia. The first settlers to arrive in the area were the Acadians in the 1670s. They farmed the fertile lowlands along the La Planche and Missaguash rivers and traded with France and New England. Trade with New England was illegal at this time but flourished nevertheless. Although the British assumed nominal control of Acadia in 1710, trade between the Acadians and France continued until at least 1741 via French settlements on Cape Breton. When the British constructed Fort Lawrence in 1750, the Acadians fled to French soil on the other side of the Missaguash River. In 1755 they were physically expelled from Acadia, many being sent to the southern American colonies. Some escaped and returned to those parts of New Brunswick and Cape Breton which were still in French hands (Coleman 1968a, 29, 90-91).

Research Techniques

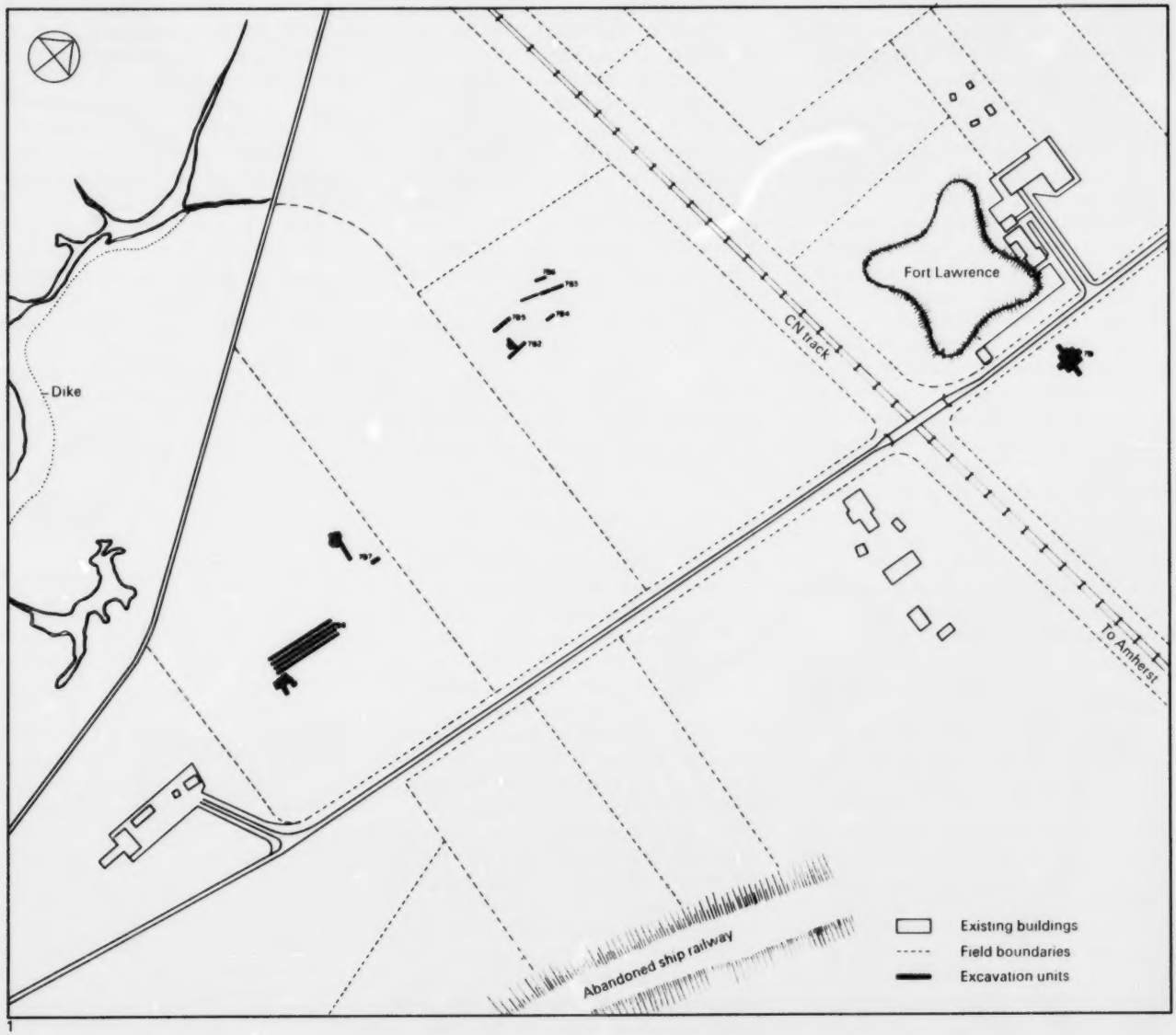
In the summer of 1968, Pierre Nadon conducted a series of exploratory excavations in an attempt to find the Acadian townsite of Beaubassin. The excavation consisted of eight units spread over a large area (Fig. 1), each representing a single structure. Six of the eight units (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8) returned varying amounts of glassware.

Since few glass objects were found, it was decided to analyse these artifacts with respect to historically defined occupation periods and glassware types rather than consider each excavation unit separately. It was hoped that by this procedure an approximate date of occupation could be assigned to each unit.

A shortwave ultraviolet light source (Fisher Scientific UVS-11) was used to determine the presence or absence of lead in the clear glass artifacts. The colour code used therein refers to the Nickerson Color Fan (Munsell Color Company) ; colours were always determined under fluorescent lighting.

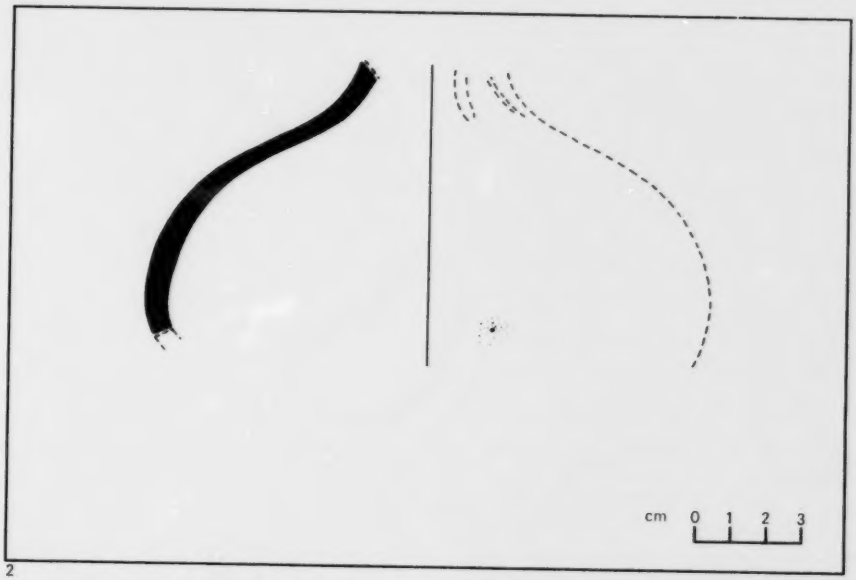
I wish to thank Jane Mousette of Ottawa, a former colleague, for the artifact drawings in this paper.

1 Site map of Beaubassin, Nova Scotia, showing excavation units.



1

2 Globular wine bottle, ca. 1685-1730 (7B8F2-6).



2

Glassware of the Acadian Period

There were four kinds of glassware excavated at Beaubassin which may be related to the Acadian period on the basis of manufacturing techniques, glass type and prevailing style. In addition to globular wine bottles and later "flower-pot" wine bottles, there were also utilitarian bottles of blue-green glass and clear, non-lead glass vessels.

Wine bottles were often used as containers for substances other than wine or spirits. Noël Hume (1969b: 20) describes a number of wine bottles discovered at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, full of cherries and their liquid, and F. Buckley (1933: 234) cites a 1735 advertisement showing medicines stored in ordinary wine bottles. In this report the term "wine bottle" refers to all common-place olive green or black glass, roughly cylindrical bottles.

Late 17th-Early 18th Century Globular Wine Bottles

French and English wine-bottle styles of this period seem to be generally similar. Wine bottlemaking was a relatively new industry in both countries and progress in glassmaking up to the early 1700s seems to have been much the same. Barrelet (1953: 102) describes the French wine bottle of about 1700 as being "onion-shaped." The same shape is referred to in Noël Hume's wine bottle typology (1961: 99-100) as the "squat form" and occurs from about 1685 to 1730. In each case the bottles have short globular bodies, much broader than they are high, with broad bases and push-ups. The necks are tapered and finished simply with a cracked-off lip and applied string rim, possibly down-tooled on English bottles.

There were 14 fragments excavated from Beaubassin which fall into this category. One specimen (Fig. 2) is almost one-half of a freeblown, globular body with a height of 80 mm. and a diameter of approximately 160 mm. The glass is seed-bubbled, olive green (10Y), and has an orange-peel texture. Deep striations mark the base of the neck. The remaining 13 fragments are base, body or shoulder segments representing at least five more bottles. All are olive green varying from 2.5GY to 7.5Y. Patina is heavy on some fragments and non-existent on others.

18th-Century French Wine Bottles

Evidence from French colonial archaeological sites has shown that in France, freeblown globular bottles were being replaced at least as early as the 1730s by bottles blown in a shoulder-height dip mould. The resulting bottles are the common "flower-pot" bottles (Noël Hume 1961: 110) with tapered bodies and long tapered necks simply finished with a cracked-off lip and applied, rounded string rim. The glass used was dark olive green, a product of the coal-fired furnace which was not used in France until after 1700 (Scoville 1950: 41). In 1735 the French government standardized the size of

wine bottles to a volume of 93 centilitres and a weight of at least 25 ounces empty (Barrelet 1953 : 102). Such a decree could have initiated the use of dip moulds or, if they were already in use, would have accelerated the frequency of their usage. Dip moulds continued to be used throughout the remainder of the century; however, the small number of specimens from Beaubassin could be expected to have been manufactured before 1750, assuming no French bottles came into the area after the expulsion of the Acadians.

Sixteen fragments were from "flower-pot" shaped wine bottles having evidence of tapered bodies and necks and plain finishes as described above. One specimen is an olive green (10Y) neck fragment of badly decomposed glass. Long, deep striations are still visible on the neck, twisting to the right as they rise. The cracked-off lip is approximately 30 mm. in diameter. The string rim has been accidentally broken off the neck and all that remains is a thin line of rough glass around the neck 14 mm. below the top of the lip.

All of the remaining fragments are small and vary only slightly in colour from 7.5Y to 10Y. The glass has deteriorated to a considerable extent leaving a brown, flaky patina that seems to be peculiar to French wine bottle glass of the 18th century. Noël Hume (1961 : 109) describes this patina as being similar to brown sugar in its consistency. Patina was a consideration in assigning fragments to this bottle type when other considerations such as shape failed.

Utilitarian Blue-Green Bottles

A second bottlemaking tradition in France during the 18th century involved the wood-fired furnace and the "common" bubbly, blue-green glass it produced. Unlike the glass from a coal-fired furnace, this glass was used to manufacture bottles in a variety of shapes (Scoville 1950 : 111-12). Bottles representing two of these shapes were found at Beaubassin. The first is a flat-sided bottle, probably square, that was possibly used for olive oil or liquor or perhaps even toilet water, and the second is a bottle with a circular cross-section that could have had any of a number of uses. Bottles of "common" glass have been found on other French colonial sites in historical contexts from 1732 to 1760. Ten such blue-green fragments were recovered from Beaubassin which quite likely relate to the Acadians. There was also a small amount of burned blue-green glass from three excavation units.

One specimen, a base and body fragment of very heavily seed-bubbled, blue-green (10BG) glass, is from a square or rectangular bottle. One side of the bottle has an almost complete width of 75 mm. The basal surface is concave to a height of 11 mm. and bears a glass-tipped pontil mark 34 mm. in diameter.

Another specimen is the only vessel from the site with a circular cross-section. The quality of the glass, however, is the same as those with linear cross-sections : dense seed bubbles and a glossy, blue-green colour (5BG). The base, approximately 55 mm. in diameter, appears to have a bell-shaped push-up approximately 15 mm. high. There is a glass-tipped pontil mark at the tip of the push-up.

The remaining fragments are from flat-sided bottles probably similar to the first example described above. The quality of the glass does not vary and has a colour range of 5BG to 10G.

Clear Non-Lead Glass Vessels

One would not expect to find a significant number of fine glass artifacts on a site such as Beaubassin. Coleman (1968b : 13) refers to porringers and mugs used by the Acadians, these being more practical vessels for a pioneer life. Any clear glass used by the Acadians would most likely be non-lead, as lead glass was not produced in France until the late 18th century (Barrelet 1953 : 107 ; Scoville 1950 : 44), and lead glass produced by the English in the early 18th century was expensive.

There were four non-lead glass fragments found at Beaubassin which could have been from vessels used by the Acadians. One specimen is a small rim fragment that may have been from a tumbler. The glass is clear with a pale green tint and extensive crizzling, features common to clear glass produced in France in the 18th century (Charleston 1952 : 18-9). The rim has a sheared and imperfectly fire-smoothed lip approximately 60 mm. in diameter. Examination under a

shortwave ultraviolet light revealed a wiggly line on the rim that was barely visible to the naked eye. Further examination under a microscope showed the line to be incidental etching from a substance, probably enamel, that had been applied to the rim as a means of decoration. Such a line close to the rim was a common design element in engraving and enamelling of the German-Bohemian style which prevailed in France in the mid-18th century.

Also recovered from the site was a body fragment from an engraved tumbler. No rim remains but one edge of a crude, copper-wheel engraved design is present. Engraving non-lead glass was practiced on the continent, and by the 1770s in New England, but was uncommon to English manufacture (Elville 1951 : 153).

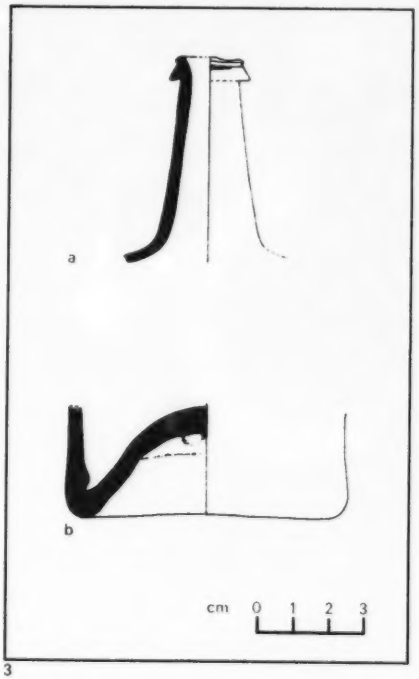
The other two fragments, both of clear, unpatinated, non-lead glass, are fragments from stemware bowls. One is a rim fragment with a cracked-off, fire-polished lip, approximately 75 mm. in diameter, from a waisted or bell-shaped bowl. The other is simply a fragment with vertically and horizontally curved planes as from a rounded bowl.

Late 18th-Century English or American Glassware

Most of the glass artifacts from Beaubassin were of English manufacture. A few were of suspected American manufacture, but all were made after the middle of the 18th century. The variety of types – wine bottles, case bottles, snuff bottles, medicinals and lead glass tableware – seems to indicate an almost continuous occupation of the site after the expulsion of the Acadians up to the early 1800s.

Cylindrical Wine Bottles, ca. 1750-1770

Throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries, wine was commonly bought and stored in wooden barrels, and wine bottles, such as the globular bottles discussed earlier, were merely used for serving in taverns and at the table (Price 1908 : 116 ; Leeds 1914 : 290). In the first half of the 18th century it became a custom to bin wine in bottles at first upside down and then on their sides (McKearin 1971 : 125, 127), thus necessitating a change in bottle shape, for bottles with bulbous bodies were inconvenient storage vessels for these methods. The sides of the body then became straighter, and by about 1750, wine bottles commonly had short, cylindrical bodies with broad bases. Their necks were still tapered but had a slightly more complicated finish than previously. The lip was everted over a down-tooled string rim, a style consistent throughout this period which Noël Hume dates as about 1750 to 1770 (Noël Hume 1961 : 104). Between 12 and 20 bottles of this type were represented by 22 fragments varying in colour from 10Y to 5Y.



3 English wine bottle fragments, ca. 1750-70 : *a*, bottle neck (7B2D1-1) ; *b*, bottle base (7B2A2-2).

Figure 3 illustrates a typical neck and base of this style of bottle. The neck (Fig. 3, *a*) is olive green (7.5Y), vertically striated and lightly seed-bubbled. It is short and tapered, finished with an everted lip and down-tooled string rim. Its dimensions are included in Table 1 with the dimensions of six other finishes of this form and period from Beaubassin.
The base (Fig. 3, *b*) is of heavy, seed bubbled, olive green (7.5Y) glass. Its base is broad, 119 mm. in diameter, and has a distinct basal sag. The push-up is bell shaped, 37 mm. high, and

Table 1. Cylindrical Wine Bottle Necks

Specimen No.	Dimensions (in mm.) Lip diam.	Lip Ht.	Str. Rim diam.	Str. Rim ht.	Finish ht.	Neck ht.	Neck diam.
7B2D1-1	28	4	34	7	11	82	25, 32, 48
7B1C2-7							50
7B1C2-15	27	3	34	6	9		25
7B1D2-1	27	4	32	5	9		25
7B2C3-2							33
7B3E3-1		4		5	9	80	34, 51
7B3B1-19							33, 50

Table 2. Description of Cylindrical Bottle (Fig. 4)

Body part	Shape	Dimensions (in mm.) Height	Diameter(s)
Lip	Downtooled	9	37
String rim	Downtooled	6	34
Neck	Roughly cylindrical	90	27, 37, 44
Body	Cylindrical	150	94, 91, 88
Base	Basal sag		94
Push-up	Rounded	33	

Table 3. Cylindrical Wine Bottle Necks

Specimen No. and Colour	Dimensions (in mm.) Lip diam.	Lip ht.	Str. Rim diam.	Str. Rim ht.	Finish ht.	Neck ht.	Neck diam.
7B2C1-2 10Y	31	4	35	6	10	94	27, 35, 46
7B3C3-4 10Y	31	4	34	11	15	65+	26, 30
7B3A3-2 7.5Y	27	4	32	5	9	67+	26, 35

bears two marks, one of which is a pontil mark 59 mm. in diameter. The other mark is a shallow quatrefoil impression, 40 mm. in diameter, formed by pushing the base up with a quatrefoil-tipped rod (Jones 1971 : 66). The pontil mark was left by a sand pontil which somewhat diffused the first mark as the sand-covered glass of the pontil followed the contour of the basal surface (Jones 1971 : 69).

Of the remaining fragments there were seven bases large enough to be positively included in this group, along with several smaller fragments which satisfied most of the conditions of description such as basal shape and diameter, empontiling technique and colour. Their approximate diameters ranged from 110 mm. to 130 mm. with a mean of 116.8 mm.

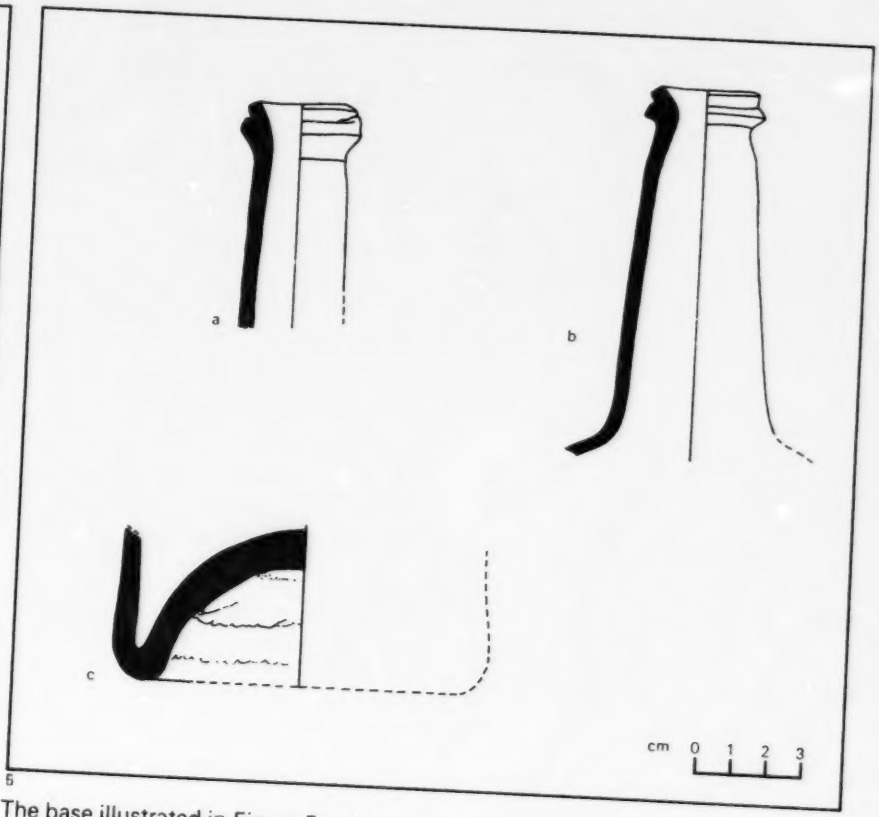
Cylindrical Wine Bottles, ca. 1770-1800

In the years between 1770 and 1800, wine bottles changed considerably into what Noël Hume (1961 : 105) calls the "evolved cylindrical form." The body was now tall and slender with a much smaller basal diameter than before. The neck had become longer and more cylindrical and was often bulged in the middle. Additional glass was sometimes used to form the lip and the string rim, making finishes generally larger and more varied in shape.

The specimen shown in Figure 4 is a good example of this form. It is a tall (265 mm.) cylindrical bottle of seed-bubbled, olive green (10Y) glass with an iridescent patina. It has a sand pontil mark close to the edge of the base and a flat, circular impression at the tip of the push-up. A description of this bottle is given in Table 2. There were only about a dozen bottles of this type, represented by 12 fragments. The two neck fragments illustrated in Figure 5 possibly belong to the early part of the time period (1770-1800), whereas the bottle in Figure 4 with its more advanced finish could be

4 English wine bottle, ca. 1770-1800 (7B1C5-2).

5 English wine bottle fragments, ca. 1770-1800 : *a*, bottle neck (7B2C3-4) ; *b*, bottle neck (7B2C1-2) ; *c*, bottle base (7B1C2-11).



closer to the end of the period. The specimen shown in Figure 5, *b* is a very ordinary, almost cylindrical neck with an everted lip and downtooled string rim. Figure 5, *a* varies slightly in having a less common uptooled string rim ; however, a finish of this form was found at Rosewell, Virginia, in a post-1770 archaeological context (Noël Hume 1962 : 215). Neck dimensions can be found in Table 3.

The base illustrated in Figure 5, *c* is almost identical to that of Figure 4, save for a slightly larger diameter, 102 mm. The same empontiling technique has been used and the base has been pushed up in the same manner. In this case the sand pontil mark is 60 mm. in diameter and the circular impression at the tip is 24 mm. in diameter. The push-up has a rounded profile and is 33 mm. high. The glass is olive green (10Y), slightly patinated and heavily seed-bubbled.

The remaining specimens are mainly base fragments with rounded basal profiles. Their colour, olive green, varies from 10Y to 7.5Y, one fragment being 5Y. Approximate base diameters range from 95 mm. to 105 mm. on six base fragments measured.

6 Case bottle bases : *a*, base with ring-shaped pontil mark, 18th century (7B1C2-2) ; *b*, base with sand pontil mark, 18th century (7B1B2-1).

Case Bottles

Square-sectioned bottles blown in dip moulds were being manufactured as early as the first half of the 17th century in England, and apparently preceded circular bottles as containers for wine (Noël Hume 1969a : 33). Their popularity decreased in the latter half of the 17th century with the manufacture of stronger circular bottles, but increased again greatly in the 18th century when they became containers for a variety of substances such as medicines, blacking and gin.

Case bottles from the 18th and early 19th centuries can be distinguished by their bodies which taper from shoulder to base, their horizontal shoulders and very short necks. Finishes were rudimentary, consisting only of an applied lip or collar. Most often the bases were concave resulting in a four-point bearing surface. Frequently the basal surface was marked with simple embossed designs. The style remained the same until the early 1800s when the use of hinged moulds increased (Toulouse 1969b : 535). There were at least six case bottles represented by the 33 fragments.

The specimen illustrated in Figure 6, *a* is a very typical case bottle base. It has a four-point concave bearing surface which has a ring-shaped pontil mark at the centre. Corners of the body are very sharp, and distinct withdrawing lines can be seen on the body. The dimensions of this base and the other measureable case bottle base fragments from Beaubassin can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Case Bottle Bases

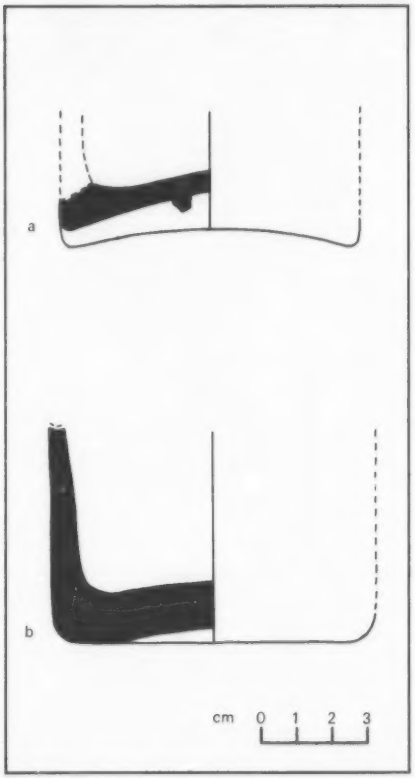
Specimen No. and Colour	Dimensions (in mm.) Base	Push-up ht.	Pontil diam.
7B3B1-11 2.5GY	69+	10+	
7B1B3-7 10Y	86+	10+	11, 23
7B1B2-2 10Y	91 x 92	6	55
7B1C2-2 7.5Y	84 x 85	18	14, 24

The second specimen in Table 4 is identical to the base in Figure 6, *a* with one exception. Embossed on the basal surface and partially obscured by the pontil mark is a simple Greek cross, a common mark found on case bottle bases.

Another specimen differs from the other case bottle bases in having a large sand pontil mark on an almost flat base (Fig. 6, *b*). The corners of the body are rounded, possibly due to the thicker glass used.

Of the remaining case bottle fragments, that shown in Figure 7, *a* is a typical neck and shoulder. The shoulder is horizontal and joins a short neck with an applied trumpet-shaped lip. Including the lip, the neck is only 30 mm. high. The lip itself is uneven, varying from 8 mm. to 11 mm. in height, and has a diameter of 39 mm. The neck tapers under the lip, its diameter ranging from 24 mm. to 34 mm. at its base. The shoulder is approximately 80 mm. square.

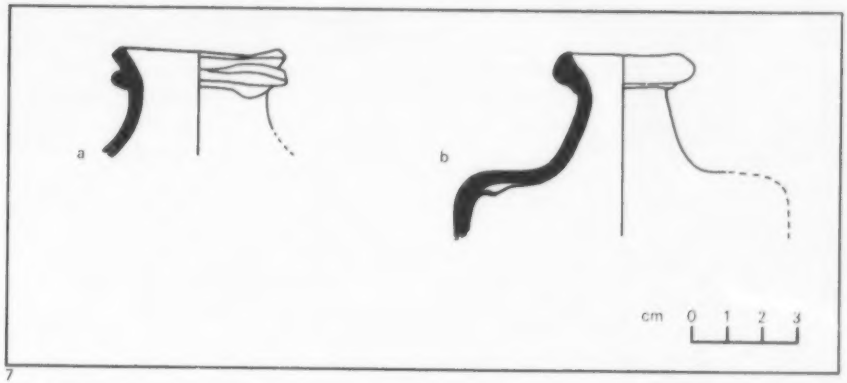
The remaining fragments are flat-sided body fragments, some with part of a 90-degree corner extant. They range in colour from 5GY to 7.5Y. Bubbling varies from light to heavy.



6

Square-sectioned bottles such as the case bottles just described did not always have narrow necks. Some were for substances such as snuff, jalap or pickles, in which case a wide mouth would be necessary. Wide-mouthed bottles are illustrated in McKearin and McKearin (1948 : Pl. 227), Watkins (1968 : 151) and Munsey (1970 : 86). Most of them have straight sides and almost flat bases similar to 17th-century case bottles (Noël Hume 1969a : 34).

7 *a*, case bottle neck and shoulder fragment, 18th century (7B3A1-3); *b*, snuff bottle neck, 18th century (7B2A1-1).
8 Turlington Balsam of Life bottle, ca. 1754-1860: *a*, profile of base; *b*, front panel of body; *c*, side panel; *d*, back panel (7B1C5-1).



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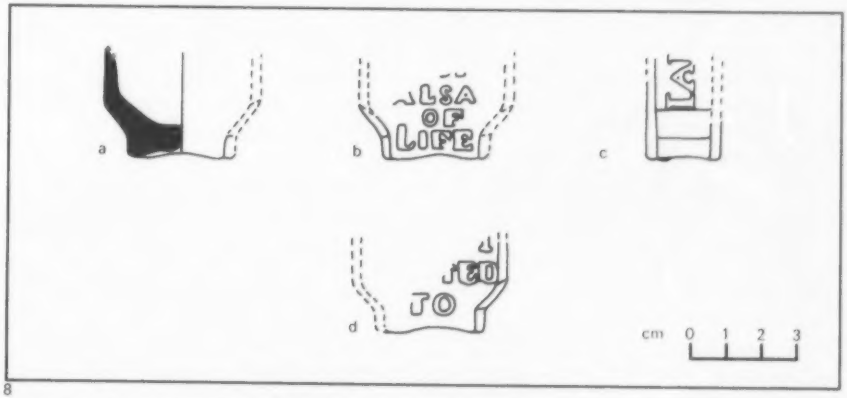


8

Snuff Bottles

The practice of taking snuff in England and America extended from the 18th century until well into the 20th century. Containers for snuff were varied, bottles being used mainly for selling snuff and not for storing it in the home (Munsey 1970: 77).

Snuff bottles were either mouth-blown into an octagonal or square-sectioned dip mould, or blown and then "paddled" (Munsey 1970: 77) into shape, presumably by means of a wooden paddle used to flatten the sides. They had a wide mouth with a short, rudimentary neck. Finishes were not limited to any particular form. The lip, often everted, could also be plain, downtooled or rounded. String rims, when present, were often downtooled. The base was usually almost flat and generally bore a sand pontil mark. The snuff bottle shape changed little through the 18th and 19th centuries; however, bottles manufactured after the 1860s can be distinguished by the absence of a pontil mark. It was at this time that the snap case was developed (Scoville 1948: 17; Toulouse 1969a: 532).

At least four snuff bottles were found at Beaubassin, represented by 14 fragments. One specimen (Fig. 7, *b*) is a typical snuff bottle neck and finish of olive green (2.5GY), seed-bubbled glass. Its lip has been sheared or cracked off and then everted. It is 49 mm. in diameter and 6 mm. high. The applied string rim is approximately 5 mm. high, 50 mm. in diameter and roughly downtooled. Below the string rim the neck, with a slightly concave profile, is 40 mm. in diameter and only 22 mm. high.

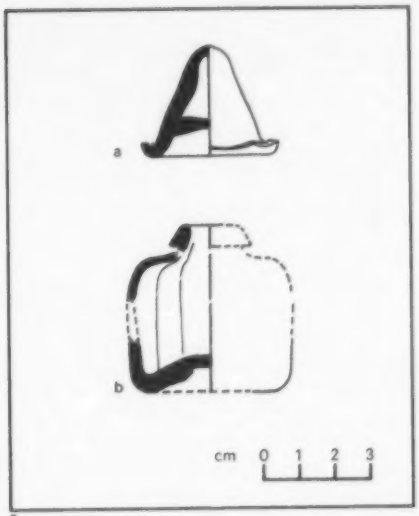
Two snuff bottle bases in the collection are both octagonal, though only one is measureable. Its base is 60 mm. wide and approximately 85 mm. long. The basal surface has been empontiled in some manner, leaving an irregular pattern of chips of glass on the surface. It is difficult to determine whether the bottle was paddled or blown-moulded.

The remaining fragments are base, body or shoulder fragments. Those from the base and body have corners greater than 90 degrees and colours ranging from 2.5GY to 7.5Y. Most of the fragments have a pitted outer surface texture while a few are smooth and glossy.

Medicine Bottles

There were two different types of medicine bottles found at Beaubassin: a patent medicine bottle and a cylindrical green phial.

9 *a*, English phial push-up, pre-1750 (7B1H1-1); *b*, clear lead glass bottle of uncertain use, early 1800s (7B1E7-5).



9

A patent for medicine was first issued in England in 1711 (Griffenhagen and Young 1959 : 159). In 1744 Robert Turlington patented his well-known cure-all, "Balsam of Life." In an effort to protect their medicines from fraudulent imitations, patentees used specific bottles made especially for them. In 1754 Turlington issued a broadside showing the latest and final form of the Balsam of Life bottle. It was a small, flat, pear-shaped bottle with chamfered corners and embossed lettering on all four sides. Judging from the large number of variations of the original bottle found, it would seem that Turlington's attempts to thwart imitators were only moderately successful.

A fragment of a clear lead glass Turlington's Balsam of Life bottle was found at Beaubassin. The lower part of the body is present to a height of 29 mm., close to half of its complete height. It widens above the base and has chamfered corners. The widest part of the body is 44 mm. wide and 22 mm. deep. It has a slightly pushed up (3 mm.) and pitted basal surface 22 mm. wide and 30 mm. long, diagonally bisected by a thick mould line. There is evidence of empontiling. The embossed lettering, according to the broadside issued in 1754, is as follows with the letters present on the Beaubassin specimen italicized : BY THE KINGS ROYAL PATENT GRAN*TED TO* / ROBT TURLINGTON FOR HIS INVENTED *BALSAM OF LIFE* / *JAN*UY 26 1754 / LONDON. The bottle from Beaubassin is probably an original Turlington bottle, and since it is made of lead glass it was most likely manufactured in England. According to Munsey (1970 : 65), embossed bottles were not common in the United States until after 1810 and then they were probably made of non-lead glass. The lettering and body shape, as much as is extant, are like those of the broadside. The bottle probably arrived at Beaubassin v ith the British who came to the area in the 1750s, but could, although it is not likely, date as late as the 1850s or 1860s as it is empontiled. Turlington's Balsam of Life was used up to the early 1900s ; bottles were still being advertised in the Illinois Glass Company catalogue of 1903.

The second medicine bottle type, a phial, is represented by a base and a body fragment, both of green (2.5G) glass, and possibly from the same bottle. The base (Fig. 9, *a*) has a high conical push-up with a sheet of glass, the pontil mark, almost completely covering the opening ; thus measurement of the push-up height is difficult but it is approximately 30 mm. high. Basal diameter and pontil mark diameter are 40 mm. and 23 mm. respectively. The body fragment is circular in cross-section.

Phials were common during the first half of the 18th century (Noël Hume 1969a : 42-3) but seem to have been gradually replaced by clear, lead-glass bottles sometime after 1750. Medicine bottles of this type had cylindrical or slightly steeple-shaped bodies with short necks and flanged lips.

Unidentified Bottles

Five vessels were found at Beaubassin which were difficult to identify positively. One of these is a small clear glass bottle, 46 mm. in diameter at the base and present to a height of 25 mm. It is made of poor quality but shiny lead glass, full of seed bubbles and non-glass inclusions. The body has been mouthblown into a plain, vertically ribbed dip mould, removed and marvered flat, forcing the ribs to appear on the interior surface of the body. The bottle was then empontiled with a glass-tipped or ring pontil which left a scar 20 mm. in diameter and a push-up 7 mm. high. The neck was simply finished by rolling the cracked-off lip down onto the neck, resulting in a downtooled "collared" lip approximately 23 mm. in diameter and 6 mm. high. A hypothetical reconstruction of this bottle appears in Figure 9, *b*.

Its manufacturing technique and style suggest it may be of early 19th-century midwestern American manufacture (McKearin & McKearin 1950: Pl. 107); however, the possibility of late 18th-century English manufacture (Davis & Middlemas 1968: 54-55) cannot be overlooked. Covill (1971: Fig. 224) illustrates a very similar bottle identifying it as an inkwell.

The second bottle, possibly a pocket flask or perfume bottle, may also be of early 19th-century, midwestern American manufacture. Only a small fragment of a cylindrical neck with a slightly rounded, slanting shoulder remains. The bottle has been mouthblown in a vertically ribbed dip mould. On the neck the ribs have been flattened, possibly a result of the tooling involved when shaping the neck.

A third bottle is represented by one base fragment of light green (7.5GY) glossy glass. The base is either square or rectangular with chamfered corners, and its complete width is 40 mm. There is a glass-tipped pontil mark 21 mm. in diameter on the almost flat base. A mould line diagonally bisects the basal surface. Glass colour and body shape suggest this may have been a condiment bottle. Since the bottle is empontiled it was probably manufactured after the late 18th century but before the 1860s (Noël Hume 1970: 75), and could be of either English or American manufacture.

Two more bottles are represented by fragments. Both are flat-sided and of unknown origin or function. One specimen of green (10G) glass is very densely seed-bubbled. One edge of the fragment has the beginning of a corner. The side has an extant width of 63 mm. The other fragment, of seed-bubbled, blue-green (5BG) glass, has the beginning of two rounded corners giving it a side width of approximately 35 mm. There are faint vertical ribs on the fragment which may or may not have been deliberate.

Lead Glass Tableware

The lead-glass tableware from Beaubassin consists largely of plain-stemmed glasses, the common utilitarian ware one would expect to find on an 18th-century British site. There were plain-stemmed wine glasses, firing glasses and one decanter stopper. A maximum of 16 objects was found.

Firing Glasses

Firing glasses are short, thick-stemmed glasses with heavy conical or almost flat feet and usually trumpet-shaped bowls. Primarily of English manufacture, they were popular in the last half of the 18th century (Hughes 1956: 229), but were manufactured from about 1730 to well into the 1800s (Ash 1962: 84-6).

Firing glasses are represented by two stem fragments, one foot fragment and one possible bowl fragment. The stems are 20 mm. in diameter, the tallest having an extant height of 37 mm. The foot is 11 mm. thick and has an approximate diameter of 65 mm. The bowl fragment is trumpet-shaped with an approximate lip diameter of 55 mm.

Plain-Stemmed "Wine" Glasses

The remaining plain-stemmed ware fragments are from the more familiar "wine" glasses. There are at least 7 and possibly 10 glasses represented by 10 fragments. Even though the sample is rather small, there is a surprising amount of variety; no two glasses are alike. All of the feet appear to be of a plain conical form, but one has the added feature of a folded foot rim. Folded foot rims were common before 1745 (Elville 1951: 88; Thorpe 1969: 209) and again popular after about 1780 (Elville 1951: 89). This foot could easily belong to either period.

Two stems have air tears at the stem base. This is a difficult decorative technique to date due to the differing views held by several authors. Hughes (1956: 88) and Elville (1961: 55) maintain that tears in stems disappeared by 1745-50, possibly due to the increased popularity of air twist stems about this time, but Haynes (1959: 246) feels they were more popular after the Excise Acts of 1745-46, and logically so, as they would make a glass slightly lighter. In any case, tears in the stem are an indication of 18th-century English manufacture.

Only two bowls were present to any extent. One specimen has a drawn stem indicative of two-piece manufacture as was most common for plain-stemmed glasses (Haynes 1959: 246). The other bowl was

welded to its stem indicating three-piece manufacture. As a result the base of the bowl is convex. This bowl seems to be later than the other, possibly late 18th century (McNally: pers. comm.).

Decanter Stopper
A finial from a clear glass, ball-finialled stopper was found at Beaubassin. The ball is heavy and contains one large air tear. According to Hughes (1956 : 254) finials of this type containing a tear were not manufactured in England until after 1710, and it seems likely they were seldom made after mid-century with the changing styles away from heavy, globular shapes as effected by the Excise Acts of 1745-46 (Thorpe 1969 : 201).

Similar finials have been found at Fort Beausejour, N.B. (McNally 1971a : 89) and Fort Amherst, P.E.I. (McNally 1971b : 13), although each has several tears instead of only one. Both of these sites were occupied by the British after 1755 and 1758 respectively, indicative either of the repeated use and long life of tableware or a longer period of popularity for this form than has been assumed. It is possible, of course, that the finial from Beaubassin was manufactured in the first half of the 18th century but not deposited until the last half.

Discussion and Conclusions

Excavation Unit 1
Excavation of unit 1 unearthed an unmortared fieldstone structure which, judging from the artifacts found in and around it, would relate to the British settlement of the Beaubassin area after 1750, possibly extending into the early 1800s. This excavation was well represented by fragments of English wine bottles, case bottles, snuff bottles, medicine bottles, firing glasses and several fragments of other plain-stemmed tablewares found both inside and outside the walls of the structure. French glass was limited to only seven bottle fragments, all of which were found in levels below the surface layer. The presence of such a small amount of French glass could be an indication that an English structure was built on the site of an abandoned Acadian farm.

While the tableware generally indicates a date of manufacture before the mid-1700s, its deposit date would most likely be after the 1750s due to the overwhelming amount of English bottle glass from a post-1750 date of manufacture found in the same strata. Table glass, as it still is, was treated much more carefully than bottle glass and consequently would have a much longer life. This idea, coupled with the fact that there was no lead-glass tableware found in units 7 and 8 which were otherwise heavily represented by French glassware types, strongly suggests the English table glass was used by the English after the 1750s and not by the French before this time.

Excavation Units 2 and 3
There is little to distinguish between these two excavations as far as glass is concerned. Both have large representations of post-1750 English glass (fragments from snuff, wine and case bottles ; fragments of lead glass tableware) and small amounts of French glass, the latter conceivably representing the Acadian occupancy of the area. Unit 2 does, however, have more French glass, and unit 3 has part of a small bottle of possibly early 19th-century manufacture and two or three lead glass objects. On the basis of this information we may suggest that unit 3 be considered more recent than unit 2. Each shows British occupation after 1750.

Excavation Unit 4
The return of glass was extremely small from this excavation and for this reason it has not been included in this discussion.

Excavation Units 7 and 8
Again, there is little differentiating these two units. The glassware from each consisted of fragments of globular bottles, flowerpot bottles, blue-green bottles and one fragment of non-lead glass all of which strongly reflect the Acadian occupation prior to 1750. There were a few fragments of glassware relating to a post-1750 occupation found in unit 8, but most of these mended with fragments from units 1, 2 and 3, suggesting that cultivation took place after the

British settled in the area. Such cultivation could also explain the presence of a small amount of pearlware (Moussette 1970 : 209) found in unit 8.

Thus, on the basis of dating of glassware types and their occurrences in the excavations, the excavation units fall into the following order from most recent to earliest occupation : 1, 3, 2, 7 or 8.

Analyses of Glassware and Ceramics Compared

The excavation units largely composed of English glass artifacts could be distinguished from those containing French material ; however, the situation was different for ceramics. Unit 2 contained several wine bottles dating to 1750-1770 as well as a small amount of French glass and English lead glass. Its ceramics content was quite different, consisting mainly of French ceramics (Moussette 1970 : 224), placing it chronologically closer to units 7 and 8. The chronological order of the units also differed for ceramics and glass : 3, 1, 2, 7, 8 as opposed to 1, 3, 2, 7 or 8. Moussette (1970 : 215) has placed unit 3 later than unit 1 because no French ceramics were found in unit 3 ; however, a small amount of French glass was found and this is why it has been placed earlier than unit 1 in the glass chronology.

The nature of the ceramics from the site compares favourably with that of the glass. Ceramics from the French occupation are described as hard, utilitarian wares (Moussette 1970 : 226) while those from the British occupation include finer ceramics such as pearlware and creamware (Moussette 1970 : 208). This parallels glass from the French occupation which consisted almost entirely of common green and blue-green bottles, and glass from the British occupation which, in addition to wine bottles, had more expensive lead glass and non-utilitarian wares.

Social Implications of the Beaubassin Glassware

Coleman, in her historical reports (1968a : 40 ; 1968b : 7-10), described the life of the Acadians as quite spartan. Their diet was mainly limited to what they could grow and store themselves. Wine was bought in the usual hogsheads and commonly taken with a dipper or mug, as may be evidenced in the relative lack of wine bottles and particularly drinking glasses from the Acadian period of occupation. When the area was first settled in the 1670s, glass was not as common as it was to be 100 years later, and it seems that the Acadians must not have considered it to be a necessary commodity in later years. In the trade with the New Englanders and the French it is possible that items such as machinery parts or tools had priority over fancy glassware. Also noticeably absent were wide-mouthed, blue-green bottles so common on other French colonial sites. A possible conclusion is the Acadians had little use for the items, such as capers and olives, that were packed in these vessels. On the other hand, the British traditionally had closer connections with their homeland, and bottles and their varied contents were more probably readily available from Halifax and Boston. Glass was also extremely popular in the late 18th century for containers for all sorts of goods as shown by the variety of glassware found in the small collection from Beaubassin.

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Sir Sam Hughes (1853-1921)

by Carol Whitfield

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149 *3 Gen. Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence.*

Abstract
Samuel Hughes (1853-1921), as MP for Lindsay and later for Victoria and Haliburton from 1892 to 1921, epitomized the strong pro-imperialist sentiment which characterized central Ontario in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As Borden's Minister of Militia from 1911 to 1916, Hughes played a major role in the creation of the modern Canadian army. His handling of the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the war at once contributed to the growth of Canadian autonomy and exacerbated Anglo-French divisions within Canada. His often abrasive personality led to frequent clashes with colleagues, superiors and subordinates, and Hughes was forced to resign from the government in 1916.

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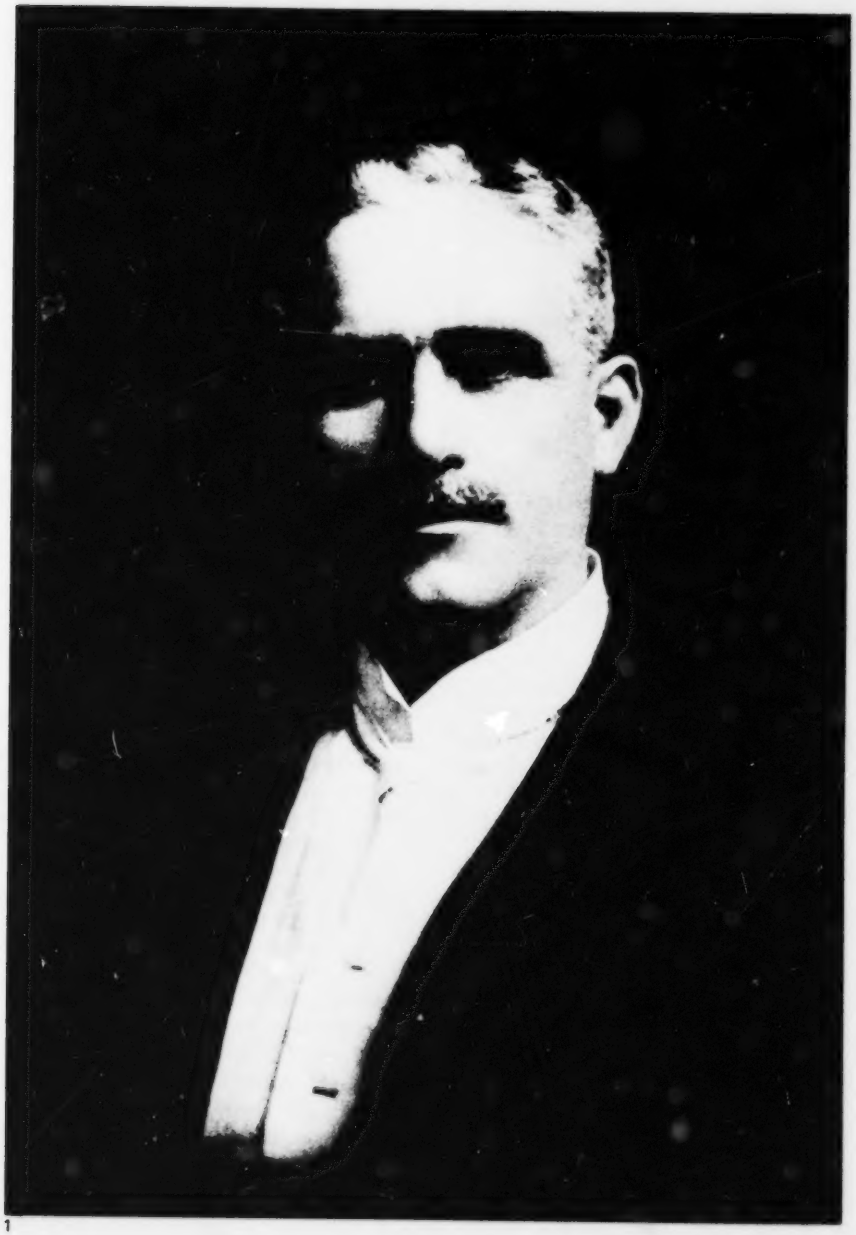
Sommaire
Samuel Hughes (1853-1921), député de Lindsay, puis de Victoria et Haliburton de 1892 à 1921, a été l'incarnation même du très vif sentiment pro-impérialiste qui a caractérisé le centre de l'Ontario à la fin du 19e siècle et au début du 20e. Propriétaire et directeur du *Lindsay Warder*, de 1885 à 1897, Hughes a soutenu les orangistes, la Milice canadienne, la confédération impériale et le Parti conservateur. Le profond intérêt que Hughes attachait à la Milice et à la défense de l'empire est né lorsqu'il est devenu membre de la Milice à l'âge de 13 ans. Durant toute sa vie, il a été un officier de milice très actif ; à trois reprises, il a levé des corps d'armée pour les guerres coloniales britanniques. Chose étonnante, Hughes ne tenait aucun compte des formalités militaires et offrait ses services directement aux chefs politiques, provoquant ainsi ressentiment et consternation dans la hiérarchie militaire. C'est ainsi que Hughes n'a pu s'engager dans le contingent canadien qui a participé à la guerre des Boers ; néanmoins, il est parvenu à servir comme volontaire dans l'armée anglaise.

Après la guerre des Boers, Hughes est devenu critique du parti conservateur pour la milice et la défense et, lorsque Borden a formé son cabinet en 1911, il était naturel qu'on lui confie ce portefeuille. Comme ministre de la Milice et de la Défense de 1911 à 1916, Hughes a joué un rôle très important dans la création de l'armée canadienne moderne. Réalisant que la guerre était imminente. Hughes a augmenté de façon considérable le budget de la défense et a tenté d'assurer personnellement le contrôle de tout ce qui relevait de son ministère. À la déclaration de la guerre, la substitution de son plan de mobilisation aux ordres permanents a jeté la confusion dans les rangs des forces canadiennes volontaires. Néanmoins, la personnalité et l'énergie de Hughes ont eu raison de ces difficultés et, au nouveau camp de Valcartier, on a créé le Corps expéditionnaire canadien que Hughes a réussi à imposer comme unité autonome.

Malheureusement, la personnalité de Hughes a également porté préjudice à l'effort de guerre du Canada. Ses déclarations et ses actions ont non seulement attisé les rivalités entre les groupes anglais et français du Canada, mais ont aussi provoqué de fréquentes altercations avec ses collègues, ses supérieurs et ses subordonnés. Hughes était un homme qui assurait personnellement le commandement et refusait d'être redevable envers qui que ce soit. Borden a dû demander la démission de Hughes, à l'automne de 1916, parce qu'il omettait de soumettre d'importantes décisions d'organisation à l'approbation du conseil des ministres.

1 Col. Sam Hughes, MP (Victoria-Haliburton, Ont.), July 1905. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



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Sam Hughes was a man who often seemed to be trying to serve his country in the wrong century. With his undeniable energy and central Ontario beliefs, he might have made an excellent Minister of Militia and Defence in Macdonald's first government. Macdonald might have been capable of controlling Hughes' volatile personality and putting a bridle on his tongue: Borden never could force Hughes to behave like a minister of the crown.

Samuel Hughes, known throughout his life as "Sam," was born 8 January 1853 in Darlington County, Ontario. From his father, John Hughes of Tyrone, Ireland, Sam acquired his strong Orange and imperialist beliefs. These views were probably reinforced by his mother, Caroline Laughlin, who was of Scottish, Irish and Huguenot descent.[1]

Possibly his mother's stories of her grandfather, General Saint Pierre, Brigadier of Cuirassiers, and her two uncles, who served under Napoleon at Waterloo,[2] encouraged the boy's fascination with war. Hughes joined the active militia when he was 13 and several years later was mustered to guard the border during the abortive Fenian Raid of 1870.[3] He rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel commanding the 45th Battalion on 9 June 1897.[4] By that date he had achieved such prominence in Canadian militia and political circles that he had been offered the positions of Deputy Minister of Militia (1891) and Adjutant General (1895). Hughes declined both

desk jobs, but he did take part in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebration on 20 June 1897, for which he received a medal.[5]

The Hughes were not wealthy but they did send their son to Toronto Model and Normal School. After graduation, he taught for a short time in Belleville and Bowmanville before returning to Toronto to join the staff of Toronto Collegiate Institute, where he taught English and history besides attending the University of Toronto part-time. Hughes graduated with a BA in 1880.[6] Five years later he purchased the Lindsay *Warder*, a strongly Conservative paper which he edited until 1897.

Through the pages of his newspaper, Hughes made himself and his views known to the citizens of Victoria County. His ideas were not always popular, but a burned newspaper office and shots at the editor did not deter him.[7] In 1891, he stood for election as the Conservative Party candidate in North Victoria, but was defeated. A year later he won the same riding in a by-election. From February 1892 until his death in 1921, Hughes represented the constituency of North Victoria, or Victoria and Haliburton as it became after the redistribution at the turn of the century.[8] In the House of Commons, Hughes was one of the leading Conservative critics on military and militia affairs.

Regardless of how exciting the parliamentary battle was, Hughes was constantly restless. He offered to personally raise a corps to assist Britain in the Egyptian-Sudanese campaign and in the Afghan Frontier War. Both offers were declined. Because he felt so strongly that the colonies must militarily assist England in her conflicts, Hughes went on an extended visit to New Zealand and Australia during the winter of 1897-98, promoting colonial military assistance.[9]

His chance came with the Boer War. As soon as he learned that war was certain, he offered to personally raise a corps for service in South Africa. Unfortunately, he made the offer in an unorthodox fashion. Instead of just offering his services to the district officer commanding, who would transmit the offer to General Hutton, commander of the Canadian Militia, Hughes impatiently wrote also to F. W. Borden, the Minister of Militia and Defence, and to Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Before Hutton had an opportunity to decide on the merits of Hughes' offer, he was being pressured to accept it by Borden and Chamberlain. Hutton furiously accused Hughes of "irregularity and breach of military procedure."[10] Unwisely deciding not to let the issue calm down, Hughes again wrote Hutton proffering his services. Hutton, having decided this letter was threatening and insubordinate, denied Hughes employment in South Africa and suggested that any more action on the latter's part might lose him the command of the 45th Battalion. Hughes ignored the warning. Hearing rumours that a fellow officer was to command the Canadian contingent, Hughes wrote Hutton attacking the possible commander, praising himself, hinting about irregularities in the British high command and threatening Hutton.[11] Not only was this letter insubordinate, it was appallingly undiplomatic.

Hutton, who had been called before the Cabinet three times to explain why Hughes could not go to South Africa,[12] was livid. Probably pressure from the Cabinet was the only thing that prevented Hutton from cashiering Hughes. Instead he demanded a public apology for the two letters and denied Hughes permission to join the Canadian contingent. Hughes was, however, allowed to sail with the contingent in the SS *Sardinian* but, "It is to be clearly understood that this officer does not proceed in any military capacity whatever, and will accordingly, not wear uniform on board ship."[13]

As soon as he disembarked at Cape Town, Hughes hurried to register at the Grand Hotel. Here he re-established contacts with high-ranking British officers he had met at the Diamond Jubilee. They found him a job as a railway transport officer.[14] His next position was assistant to Inspector General Settle on the lines of communication; then he became Settle's chief of intelligence staff, and finally was transferred to General Warren's staff where he served in the same capacity as well as leading a mounted brigade in the Griqualand West and Bechuanaland campaigns.[15] It was a phenomenal rise during a period of just eight months, but unfortunately Hughes could not keep his pen from committing his exploits to paper. Writing to the newspapers at home, he detailed not only his own brilliant activities but also the failures of his superiors.[16] Soon he was politely dismissed from the battle front; he

2 Gen. Sir Sam Hughes watching British attack at Battle of the Somme, October 1917. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

was given command of a unit returning home on a troop ship to England.[17]

The Boer War did not end Hughes' involvement in the British empire. He had always been an uncompromising supporter of imperial federation: the masthead of the *Warder* was,

A union of hearts, A union of hands,
A union no man can sever,
A union of tongues, A union of lands,
And the flag — British Union forever.[18]

Hughes envisioned a confederation of the British Empire with the various autonomous bodies maintaining the form of government best suited to their individual requirements. The imperial Parliament would handle international, financial, military and naval matters. Hughes felt that each country within the confederation would set its tariffs but that the imperial Parliament would be able to impose sanctions upon any country by adding a high imperial tariff to the individual member's tariff. Similarly each country would be responsible for its own defence but would be duty-bound to contribute to imperial defence.[19] For this reason Hughes did not support the Canadian naval policy of the Liberals or Conservatives. He argued that a professional navy did not fit into his scheme of imperial militia authorized by the imperial Parliament.[20] This argument follows if a navy is used only for offensive purposes. Such a navy, under Hughes' allotment of responsibilities, would then be a creation of the imperial Parliament. By denying that Canada needed a navy, Hughes denied the possible defensive functions of a navy.

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The speeches he made on imperialism and his letters to General Hutton had amply illustrated that Hughes was opinionated, outspoken and rash. Nevertheless Borden chose him to be Minister of Militia and Defence when the Conservatives won the election in 1911. According to his memoirs, Borden hesitated about the appointment but, having extracted a promise that he would be discreet, he gave Hughes the desired appointment.[21] Hughes had strong advocates recommending him: Clifford Sifton, Sir Frederick Borden and Hughes himself called on Sir Robert Borden to plead the cause. However, the major factor in Hughes' favour was probably the strong support he could muster from his fellow Ontario Orangemen. Macquarrie, in an article on the formation of Borden's cabinet, lists one other reason for Hughes' appointment. When Borden was personally defeated in the 1904 election, Hughes was the first man to offer the party leader his seat.[22] If the incident did occur, no doubt it influenced Borden's decision.

With quiet and generally competent activity between 1911 and the summer of 1914, Hughes behaved like a minister of the crown whose sole interest is his department. Convinced that war was inevitable, he decided to augment the Defence Department's budget. Despite opposition by

his cabinet colleagues, the budget was increased by $3.5 million from the fiscal year 1911-12 to 1913-14.[23] Some of this money was spent building 44 new armouries which could double as public halls. The fourth largest of these new structures was built at Lindsay,[24] the site Hughes later authorized for the second dominion arsenal;[25] it was, incidentally, the centre of his own constituency.

Part of the increased budget paid for the new Connaught Rifle Range on the outskirts of Ottawa. Hughes handled all the plans for this project[26] to encourage one of his special interests. Having served as president of the Dominion Rifle Association and chairman of the Standing Small Arms Committee for Canada,[27] Hughes was interested in rifle accuracy which he further encouraged by free grants of ammunition to both civilian and militia rifle associations.[28]

Hughes devoted part of his time to improving the calibre of Canadian militia officers. He held the first military conferences,[29] conducted a tour of American Civil War battlefields,[30] and took selected officers to attend the annual British, French, German and Swiss manoeuvres in 1913. This final project was undertaken because Hughes felt that the majority of Canadian officers and men had no experience with either battle or large numbers of troops. He encouraged large summer militia camps so the men could become accustomed to operating in units larger than their local battalion.[31]

Unfortunately not everything Sam Hughes did as minister of militia before the war was wise. The only blunder which aroused public attention, however, was his refusal of permission to the 65th Regiment to carry arms in the *Fête-Dieu* procession in Montreal in 1914. Technically he was right, but previous ministers had avoided irritating French Canadian nationalist feelings by granting such permission.[32]

The governor general prevented a second blunder on Hughes' part from becoming very serious. In the spring of 1914, a Count Von Loudow presented himself at militia headquarters as a German officer touring Canada. Hughes decided the man's credentials were in order and answered some of his questions until the governor general ordered a security check which revealed that the count was a spy, sent to acquire specific information about Canadian defences along the St. Lawrence River.[33]

Hughes' biggest error was one that no one could prevent: he assumed too much personal responsibility. A militia council of six senior officers had been established to advise the minister, but Hughes ignored it.[34] Prior to the war this tendency not to delegate responsibility was not too serious, but once fighting started, the department's problems multiplied so enormously that one man could no longer handle all of them adequately.

Probably the most significant instance of Hughes assuming too much personal responsibility was the mobilization of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Detailed plans for mobilizing 20,000 men had been made in 1911 and revised in 1912, but Hughes discarded them. To the House of Commons he later likened his method to "the fiery cross passing through the Highlands of Scotland or the mountains of Ireland in former days." Ignoring the militia districts, he sent letters to unit commanders and individuals asking them to prepare descriptive rolls of men suitable for service overseas. These rolls were to be sent to Ottawa where the men were to be individually selected. After four days even Hughes recognized that this procedure was impossible. The new plans he issued gave each district a quota of men to raise.

"In a short time," proudly declared the Minister of Militia, "we had the boys on the way for the first contingent, whereas it would have taken several weeks to have got the word around through the ordinary channels....The contingent was practically on the way to Europe before it could have been mobilized under the ordinary plan." This disparagement of the "ordinary plan" was scarcely justified; normal military channels of communication properly used could have carried the warning in a matter of hours, not weeks. Indeed, once the confusion caused by the first dramatic but irregular "call to arms" subsided, most of the volunteers joined through existing militia units in virtually the manner prescribed by the pre-war scheme.[35]

Although many men did join through their local militia units, when they reached Valcartier they found themselves completely realigned into units which had no geographical base

3 Gen. Sir Sam Hughes, Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

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or tradition.[36] Mobilization was further hindered by the fact that final selection of the contingent was to take place at Vaicartier; good men hesitated to quit their jobs only to be turned down just before the contingent sailed for Europe.[37]

As soon as he had despatched the mobilization orders, Hughes began creating a camp to collect and train the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The physical creation of Valcartier, the huge camp outside Quebec City, was due to Hughes' fantastic energy. In a very few weeks, he erected out of virgin bush a camp to house and train 25,000 men.

Confusion prevailed at Valcartier but the situation would have gradually improved if Hughes had not interfered.

The first few days in camp was chaos. Bodies of men arrived before arrangements were made to receive them. There were no units in the true sense of the word, but certain bodies of men submitted themselves to the command of individuals many of whom were subsequently displaced by the Minister. The Valcartier Camp Staff, hindered to a great extent by the continual presence and the interference of the late Sir Sam Hughes, gradually formed this mob into units and brigades.[38]

In his memoirs, Borden cites reports of incidents of Hughes speaking harshly and insultingly to the officers at Valcartier in front of the men.[39] The trouble really was Hughes' desire to assume total personal responsibility. In a speech on 15 August 1914, he hinted that the "dearest ambition" of his life was to "lead the boys" and that he still might "go to the front."[40]

Hughes' total involvement with "the boys" caused him to hurry to New York as soon as the first contingent had sailed and race them to England. He was on hand to welcome the troops and see them settled at the future mud hole, Salisbury Plain. Among other details, Hughes assured himself that there was no liquor sold at the Canadian canteens. Eventually he was forced to rescind this order when numerous incidents showed that a totally dry camp resulted in leaves being passed at the local pubs.[41] However, he did not reverse the order before the men parodied an old song to commemorate his temperance attitude.

D'ye ken Sam Hughes, he's the foe of booze;
He's the real champion of the dry canteen;
For the camp is dead, and we're sent to bed,
So we won't have a head in the morning.[42]

Actually Hughes' presence in England was fortunate for the cause of Canadian autonomy. When he paid a courtesy call on Lord Kitchener, he learned that the Canadian forces were going to be dispersed among the British units. He refused to sanction such a decision and eventually forced Kitchener to concede that the Canadians would serve as a separate unit.[43]

Hughes returned to Canada and began preparations for mobilizing a second contingent. Again he ignored the prepared mobilization plans and ordered recruiting by electoral district. This scheme worked in cities which had the facilities to handle recruiting and training but broke down entirely in rural areas. The plan lasted only one season; there were sufficient recruits but they were poorly and unevenly trained.[44] Borden's announcement on New Year's Day, 1916, that Canada was committed to a force of 50,000 men required a new recruiting scheme. Eventually the government realized that their commitment could be met only by conscription.

Hughes augmented his recruiting difficulties by the manner in which he treated French Canadians. Beginning

wisely by approaching Cardinal Bégin over the problem of chaplains,[45] Hughes' methods soon changed.

He placed an English Protestant in charge of recruiting propaganda, [in Quebec] *and from time to time emphasized the foolishness of this action by more mischievous activities.*[46]

Hughes increased French Canadian resentment by statements such as Quebec "has not done its duty."[47]

As Minister of Militia and Defence, Hughes' problems were not limited to just recruiting sufficient men; the men had to be properly equipped. To handle the complex details of purchasing uniforms as well as rifles and shells, a shell committee was established in September, 1914.[48] Prior to this Hughes made some purchases without the Privy Council's approval.[49] The shell committee, which became the Imperial Munitions Board, worked reasonably well. Unfortunately Hughes was personally committed to Colonel J. Wesley Allison who, independently of the committee, was also placing orders. Allison's activities aroused the suspicion of the Opposition and Borden submitted to their demands for a royal commission. He therefore called Hughes home from one of his periodic visits to the front to answer the commission's queries. Borden also forced Hughes to temporarily relinquish the administration of his department during the investigation. Eventually Hughes and the shell committee were exonerated but Allison was censored for deceiving Hughes and the committee about his activities.[50] Hughes' reputation was damaged however, and the Cabinet was furious; they felt that he had subjected the government to unnecessary scrutiny. At this point Borden wrote in his diary, "It is quite evident that Hughes cannot remain in the Government."[51]

Hughes was also deeply involved in the controversy over the Ross rifle. Although the rifle had been adopted before he became the responsible minister, it had been selected by a Commons committee of which he was a member. Unfortunately he was unable to consider the rifle in a detached manner. He knew that it was an excellent target rifle and assumed that it was therefore an excellent battle rifle, a conclusion which did not necessarily follow. Confusing reports as to the rifle's behaviour with different makes of ammunition tended to support Hughes' contention that people were attacking the rifle unjustly and he strongly defended it against the documented arguments of Gwatkin and Alderson. Probably part of the reason Alderson was transferred from the command of the Canadian contingent at the front to inspector general in England in May, 1916, was because of his opposition to the Ross.[52] It is unfortunate that while Hughes and the officers argued over the attributes of the Ross, men died because the rifle jammed.

Borden and Hughes clashed finally over the organization of the Militia Department in England.

Throughout the summer of 1916 it became increasingly evident that the existing condition of affairs must be remedied: it was found that unfit men were being sent from Canada; that reinforcements were being neither sufficiently nor uniformly trained in England; that the methods of caring for convalescent wounded, and of returning casualties to the front when fit, were unsatisfactory; that recommendations for promotion in the field were being unduly delayed; and that there was a growing number of senior officers in England, stranded there when the juniors and other ranks of their units were sent as reinforcements to France. These failings could only be rectified by establishing an organization through which direct and efficient control, both military and governmental, would be exercised. The need for such an arrangement had long been foreseen by some, but the insistence of the Minister of Militia on devoting his personal interest to adjustment of arms and equipment and the destinies of individuals, rather than to the co-ordination of general policies, imposed an unreckoned indeterminate stress upon the machinery of the War Office, and precluded the effective employment of a responsible intermediary. Early in August, 1914, it had been agreed that the Minister should deal with details of a military character in direct communication with the Army Council, but the sphere of his influence was not in fact limited by the English Channel; he maintained continual touch unofficially with the front line troops, and his enthusiasm impelled him to comment frequently and freely on the tactics and strategy employed.[53]

The problem was that the Militia Department in Ottawa was corresponding with the War Office and three

separate individuals in England. MacDougall and Steele had separate commands of the two Canadian contingents in England. Completely divorced from these two officers was an honorary colonel, J. W. Carson, whom Hughes appointed as his special representative in England.[54]

Carson's terms of reference applied only to supplies but he soon came to supercede the other two officers in authority. Eventually Carson was deciding policy and dispensing promotions under Hughes' direction.[55] Confusion reigned; no one was sure who was responsible for what.

In the summer of 1916, Hughes returned to England to begin reorganizing the command structure. Despite repeated telegrams from Borden asking for his recommendations so an order-in-council could be issued, Hughes did not inform the Canadian Cabinet of his decision. It was through the newspapers that Borden learned that Hughes had established an acting sub-militia council for overseas Canadians chaired by Carson.[56] The council's decisions had to be endorsed by Hughes in Ottawa before they took effect. Despite this delay, the council was an improvement.

But Sir Sam's efforts to bring about a more business-like state of affairs were doomed to failure when he chose to ignore the Prime Minister's repeated instructions.[57]

Hughes returned to Canada to discover that an angry prime minister and Cabinet had made their own plans for the organization of the Militia Department in England. A new Ministry of Overseas Military Forces of Canada with Sir George Perley as minister would replace the sub-militia council.[58] Hughes objected strongly, claiming that the new ministry would rob him of all his powers. Because Borden was adamant, Hughes finally agreed to the new ministry if his friend, the future Lord Beaverbrook, was made minister;[59] however, when Borden announced the new ministry, Perley was named minister.

In a rage, Hughes wrote Borden a letter accusing him of planning the new ministry behind his back.[60] The letter was so impertinent that Borden was compelled to demand Hughes' resignation. After noting Hughes' lack of Cabinet responsibility, Borden stated,

I take strong exception not only to statements which it contains but to its general character and tone. You must surely realize that I cannot retain in the Government a colleague who has addressed to me such a communication. I regret that you have thus imposed upon me the disagreeable duty of requesting your resignation as Minister of Militia and Defence.[61]

Hughes resigned 11 November 1916, ending a career which had brought him all the glory and pomp he could desire. Although he had not been able to assume personal command of the troops, he had visited the front several times and taken the salute at numerous parades. He had commanded the troops, police and firemen at the Parliament buildings fire on 3 February 1916. He had also been created a Knight of the Bath on 24 August 1915,[62] and an honourary lieutenant general in the British army on 18 October 1916.[63]

Hughes retired from public service to enjoy the relative peace of his family at his Ottawa residence, 21 Nepean Street. However, by 1920 he was seriously ill and in July 1921 he was moved to Lindsay, where he died 24 August of that year.[64]

He was a man of great ability, immense energy, and strong enthusiasms, but possessed of a singular aptitude for uttering the wrong phrase at the wrong time. A man of intense egotism, he was capable of unyielding loyalty, however mistaken, for his friends and equally bitter hatred for those he considered enemies. Headstrong and imperious, he was inclined to make and announce decisions without submitting them to the Cabinet, or even to the prime minister, and he was strongly disposed to ignore the line of demarcation between political authority and military command. There seems little doubt that, as the war continued, the colonel became increasingly erratic and difficult.[65]

Appendix A
Minister's Office, Ottawa, November 1, 1916.[1]

Dear Sir Robert,–
In reply to your Memorandum of October 31st, ultimo, permit me in brief to summarize.

I do recall my visit to Great Britain in the autumn of 1914. I did expect both under the statutory law of Britain and under the law of common courtesy, that I would have been permitted to exercise some "control and direction" over our gallant Canadian boys, in the way of organization.

But there had evidently been some communication to the effect that "control and direction" of this magnificent Force should be under the British Government direct. The then Mr. George Perley, Acting High Commissioner implied such in the following words;–"You do not pretend surely to have anything to do with the Canadian soldiers in Britain."

Further, Sir Robert, I spoke to you on my return and told you the circumstances both then and subsequently. You yourself know that last year you took occasion to speak to Sir George Perley concerning the matter. The treatment he accorded me after this was the only respectable or courteous treatment he ever gave me.

Regarding the consultative sub-Militia Council. It has only been tentatively formed. My way of doing things is to obtain results, not necessarily the creation of bodies organized by Order-in-Council. As everyone knows what may seem workable in theory does not so turn out in practice.

On my arrival in England this year, I was met by your cablegram of July 31st., which you quote.

During the month of August I visited every Camp in England, France and Belgium and consulted in detail with all the leading Officers of the Canadian Force. I went further, and asked for suggestions from leading Officers of every Force.

Not content with this, however, I decided to try the thing out in practice, and in an informal way, and before embodying anything in Order-in-Council would find any weak points in the system which might arise, and could add any improvement necessary.

Every Officer concerned was distinctly notified of this that no question of rank, or pay, or precedence or anything else, other than trial organization, was contemplated.

As a result, before I left England, we had made improvements.

Permit me to draw your attention to nearly every Commission which has been formed. They look beautiful on paper, but few, if any one of them have been anything like perfect in practice. The Hospitals Commission, The Pensions Board and the National Service Commission all seemed lovely when sent out, but everyone concerned with them knows of the absurdities therein contained.

Permit me further to draw your attention to the fact that the British Constitution does not exist on paper; no Order-in-Council is behind it.

Further, had I ventured to conduct this Force on the basis of formal Orders-in-Council, the First Division would not have left Valcartier yet, and you know yourself how, by technicalities the Second Division was held up for four months through little petty haggling on the question of motor trucks, etc., etc.

The second line of your Memorandum says; "So far as I am aware you exercised the same control and direction over the Forces in Great Britain during the first year as subsequently."

Sir Robert, no one knows better than you that this statement is incorrect. This last year, with the full concurrence of the War Office, our management and direction have been given every consideration, and by their request.

One other point and I am through. It might be implied from your memorandum that my failing to secure authority by Order-in-Council for this sub-Militia Council impelled you to the course you are now pursuing regarding Sir George Perley. May I be permitted to say that both you and I know to the contrary. I knew early in August that Sir George Perley had planned something along these very lines. You have, also, admitted that as early as the first week of September you had this matter under consideration. I understand that it was under consideration by you and Perley earlier. You incidently remarked yesterday that you had not consulted any of your colleagues. Of course when I drew your attention to the statement, you corrected yourself.

Faithfully
(signed) Sam Hughes

The Right Honourable
Sir Robert L. Borden, G.C.M.G.
Prime Minister of Canada
Ottawa, Canada

Appendix B
Ottawa, November 9th, 1916[1]

Dear General Hughes,–
During your absence I have given very careful consideration to your letter of the 1st instant, and I must express my deep regret that you saw fit to address to me, as head of the Government, a communication of that nature. As you are to return tomorrow, it is my duty at once to announce to you my conclusion.

Under conditions which at times were very trying and which gave me great concern, I have done my utmost to support you in the administration of your Department. This has been very difficult by reason of your strong tendency to assume powers which you do not possess and which can only be exercised by the Governor in Council. My time and energies, although urgently needed for much more important duties, have been very frequently employed in removing difficulties thus unnecessarily created. You seemed actuated by a desire and even an intention to administer your Department as if it were a distinct and separate Government in itself. On many occasions, but without much result, I have cautioned you against this course which has frequently led to well founded protest from your Colleagues as well as detriment to the public interest.

I do not intend to dwell upon the instances, some of which are still under consideration, in which you have acted without authority or consultation in matters more or less important. Of these, the latest is the establishment of a Militia Sub-Council in Great Britain, including the appointment of its personnel. I conveyed to you on the 31st July a clear intimation that upon so important a proposal, involving considerations of the gravest moment, the Cabinet must be consulted before action was taken. All the members of the Government have full and direct responsibility in respect of the very important matters which the proposed Council would advise upon and direct. The intimation which was given to you in my telegram of 31st July should not have been necessary. As soon as it was received, you proceeded to disregard it. Some portions of your letter are expressive of the attitude which I have described and to which you evidently intend to adhere. Such an attitude is wholly inconsistent with and subversive of the principle of joint responsibility upon which constitutional Government is based.

But more than that, your letter is couched in such terms that I cannot overlook or excuse it. I take strong exception not only to statements which it contains but to its general character and tone. You must surely realize that I cannot retain in the Government a colleague who has addressed to me such a communication. I regret that you have thus imposed upon me the disagreeable duty of requesting your resignation as Minister of Militia and Defence.

Faithfully yours
(signed) R. L. Borden

Lieut General
Sir Sam Hughes, K.C.B.
Ottawa

1 *The Canadian Who's Who* (London: Times Publishing Co., 1910), p. 111.
2 Ernest J. Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide* (Ottawa: Mortimer Co., 1912), p. 154.
3 Charles Francis Winter, *Lieutenant-General The Hon. Sir Sam Hughes, K.C.B., M.P., Canada's War Minister, 1911-1916; Recollections of Services as Military Secretary at Headquarters, Canadian Militia, Prior to and During the Early Stages of the Great War* (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 5.
4 Ernest J. Chambers, ed., loc. cit.
5 Ibid.
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